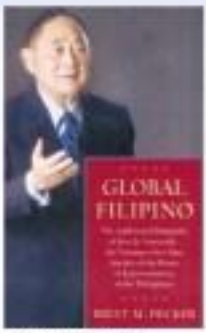
WORLD / A24
Thai gov't hides from protesters

MOTORING / B9
2009 Ford Focus: Everything but the kitchen sink

LIFESTYLE / D1
In his home, Joey de Venecia finds enlightenment

NEWS / A8
SWS survey: 64% of Pinoys oppose Charter change



HOT OFF THE PRESS Book on JDV has introductions by ex-Presidents Cory Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, November 26, 2008 ★ 9 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 332 P15 www.inquirer.net

Plan to zap 2010 elections exposed

Resolution seeks term extension of all elected officials

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE NO-EL GAMBIT HAS been revived by supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo to postpone the holding of the 2010 elections.

No-el refers to no elections.

A resolution extending the term of Ms Arroyo beyond that year has quietly found its way into the powerful House committee on constitutional amendments.

The resolution filed by administration Rep. Herminiardo Mandanas of Batangas seeks to keep Ms Arroyo in her post for one more year should his parallel proposal of moving the May 2010 elections a year later be adopted.

Lawyer Neri Colmenares yesterday said the one-year term extension for Ms Arroyo would be the logical effect of the resolution, which states that "All elected officials whose term will end as soon on June 30, 2010 shall hereby hold office until noon of June 30, 2011."

Colmenares later told the In-

FLIP TO DEF/ A8

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GMA Colombian President Alvaro Uribe escorts his VIP visitor President Arroyo at Cartagena, Colombia. Ms Arroyo flew there from Peru where she attended the Apec Leaders' summit. AFP

Ex-Speaker relives day when he saved GMA

(Editor's Note: Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr., the former Speaker, narrates pivotal events in the Arroyo administration in his biography, "Global Filipino: The Authorized Biography of Jose de Venecia Jr., the Visionary Five-Time Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines." The Inquirer received an advance copy of the book.

The book was written by American journalist Brett M. Decker, a former editor and editorial page writer for the Wall Street Journal in Hong Kong who has served on the editorial board of the Washington Times.

In Veneciaspeak, among others, about the fraud that marred the presidential election in 2004, the mass resignation of several Cabinet members in 2005 and his ouster as Speaker. The following excerpts deal with the crisis

EX-SPEAKER A6

'Methuselah' likens Gloria to Jesus Christ

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES OLDEST congressman yesterday claimed that Jesus Christ and President Macapagal-Arroyo shared something in common: They were both crucified for soaring low in popularity polls.

Garcia, 82, is the patriarch of the powerful family in Cebu that was instrumental in Ms Arroyo's victory over the late Fernando Poe Jr. in the 2004 election. He is the father of Government Service Insurance System General Manager Winston

METHUSELAH A10

US forces here to stay, says US envoy

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE UNITED States will not likely pull out its military forces in the Philippines under the incoming Obama administration despite the demand of some sectors, according to US Ambassador Kristie Kenney.

Prof. Octavio Dinampo, chair of Sulu's Bantay Gubatiba and one of the convenors of the Mindanao Peoples' Caucus, described Kenney's statement on Monday as "a frank admission that US troops are here to stay for good in their various bases within the AFP ranges."

President-elect Barack Obama has already called President Macapagal-Arroyo "to assure US relations with the Philippines," Kenney told reporters here on Monday.

"The partnership here [has been] ... going strong for so many years," she said.

The Democrats' Obama will formally assume the US presi-

US FORCES A13

Fil-Am chef is likely to keep White House job

CONCORD, NEW HAMPshire—As tempting as it may be to see the Obama family's choice of a new chef at the White House as a competition among celebrity chefs, former White House chef say the job is about stiffness service, not star power.

Walter Scheib, White House executive chef for President Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, believes there's a 90-percent chance the new administration will stick with the current chef, Cristeta Comerford, a Filipino-American.

And if the Obamas do hire someone new, it won't be a television personality or one of the celebrity names bandied about as food and political blogs, he says.

"None of those people have

FILAMERICAN A13

Where's the beef? GMA ally twits opposition

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Leila B. Salaverria

"WHERE'S THE BEEF?"

Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia yesterday asked this question on the second day of discussions in the House committee on justice on the fourth impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo in three years after the panel ruled last week that it was sufficient in form.

Yesterday's hearing on the substance of the complaint was devoted to a rebuttal by pro-Arroyo lawmakers of the opposition charges outlined Monday in a recital of facts on corruption and culpable violation of the Constitution allegedly committed by Ms Arroyo.

"When the committee found the complaint sufficient in form, it was as if this committee was offered something which looks like a sandwich in form," Garcia said.

"But the question in the minds of our colleagues is, 'Where's the beef, where's the substance?'"

Laying the ground for killing the complaint, the administration congressmen turned to legalities and technicalities to shoot holes in the opposition case. Some minority members felt the majority went too far

WHERE'S A13

STREETWISE While the usual allies of President Arroyo in the House committee of justice was eloquent in her defense, out in the street, she's so good is unpeached, if demonstrators from Bayan Muna have their way. AP

Agri execs give lie to Bolante claim on funds

He's grilled on 14 foreign trips, 23 bank accounts

By Christine O. Avendaño and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF THE Department of Agriculture (DA) yesterday turned the tables on Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante, saying he was actually "hands-on" in the implementation of a project designed by him in 2004 that resulted in the P728-million fertilizer fund scam.

The regional directors said that contrary to the claim of the then agriculture undersecretary that he had merely "downloaded" funds for the "farm implement/farm input" project to them, it was he who had chosen the type of fertilizer to be purchased by the DA regional of-

AGRI A11

WE DON'T GET JOKE Former Agriculture Undersecretary Joc-joc Bolante (right) shares a laugh with Dir. Carmencita Lasam, an agriculture regional director, during the Senate blue-ribbon inquiry. EV NOEL

RP faces tough choice for its 7 'Wonders' entry

By Raineil W. Domingo

AS THE DEADLINE DRAWS CLOSER, THE Philippines must choose between the Subterranean River National Park in Puerto Princesa and Tubbataha Reef in the Sulu Sea as its official entry in the online search for the New 7 Wonders of Nature.

RP FACES A11

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central Luzon: still cloudy with chance rains until tomorrow afternoon and Palawan still cloudy with chance rains. The rest of the country will be fair to partly cloudy. Coming shear line will bring rains over Visayas and Mindanao.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Baguio	Cloudy with rain
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Dagupan	Cloudy with rain
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with rain
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with rain
Iloilo	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with rain

EZ2
2A: 23 1
2B: 18 05

SUERTRES
6 5 5
5 0 4
4 2 1

SIX DIGIT (No winner yesterday)
4 5 2 4 1 6

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN
8 9 14 23 29 38
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POWER LOTTO 6/55 + 1/10
8 21 43 48 49 + 1
P50,000,000.00

JDV III suit junked for good

SC dismisses appeal to nix NBN-ZTE deal as mooted

By Marvin Sirabaldara

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DENIED THE MOTION for reconsideration filed by a company that had sought to block the government's $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with ZTE Corp. of China.

The firm, Amsterdam Holdings Inc., had asked the high tribunal to reconsider its July decision dismissing the case. SBC and two other parties had filed to stop the NBN-ZTE deal from pushing through.

SBC was earlier tabbed by Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, the former Speaker's son and contender who had attempted but failed early on to bag the NBN contract.

In an en banc resolution handed down on Nov. 18, the Supreme Court maintained that the issues SBC and the other petitioners—Dante Tan, Vice Gov. Rolex Suplico and Golden Angeles of the lawyers for transparency group Ladlad—had raised had become academic after President Macapagal-Arroyo rescinded the contract-related contract.

Academic

The court in effect dismissed SBC's arguments that the issues involved were of transcendental importance, that they merited the court's review, and that the court ought to inquire into the President Macapagal-Arroyo's exercise of the power to borrow funds.

"Were the resolution of the issues posed for the Court's consideration has been rendered academic by the cancellation of the NBN project by President Arroyo during her meeting with her Chinese counterpart, President Hu Jintao," the high court said.

"Since the President's exercise of the power to borrow, or entertain that implication of irregularity in the said exercise are devoid of legal basis for lack of judicially established evidence to support factual finding indicating any violation of law," it further said.

The high tribunal said it could not at present "compel, set aside or intrude into the said power."

"Neither can we in the meantime direct how the executive should exercise it," the court added.

De Venecia's claim that officials of alleged corruption in the NBN-ZTE deal and implicated the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, before Commission on Election Chair Benjamin Abalos, and other government officials and private persons.

The resulting scandal prompted Ms Arroyo to scrap the project which would have digitally connected the entire government bureaucracy in cyberspace.

Hu Jintao, ARM had sought the project which would have been implemented under a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme that would have cost the government nothing.

Instead, President Arroyo ultimately decided that it would be financed with a government to government loan from Exim China and the project would be awarded to ZTE Corp., a Chinese firm.

Consolidated case

The Supreme Court had consolidated the cases filed by ARM, Ingles and Angeles.

The court had sought the opinion of the Solicitor General. From "existing case jurisprudence" in connection with the ZTE-Ubiquitous of Telecommunications and Communication) broadband deal and considering any kind of activity with regard to the NBN deal.

"ARM maintains that setting the proper and correct parameters of the presidential powers to borrow will contribute in no small measure to political stability, national progress and development," the court said.

"Respondent ZTE Corp. opposes the motion contending that it is premature that it fails to specify the findings and conclusions reached by the court that are contrary to law," it added.

MO-HUM Policemen in formation appear to be drowsy during yesterday's inspection at the Manila Police District. They are now being called upon to be vigilant under Manila Shield.

Cops put up Manila Shield ahead of Metro protests

By Nancy Carvajal

POLICE HAVE "ERECTED A SECURITY SHIELD" around Metro Manila in anticipation of massive street actions protesting the revelations coming out of the various hearings being conducted in both houses of Congress.

At the same time, Operation Manila Shield is aimed at preventing criminals and terrorists from making advantages of the tensions and the Christmas season, said National Capital Region Police Office chief Director Leopoldo Bataoil.

Speaking to reporters during the 98th anniversary celebrations of the Quezon City Police District yesterday, Bataoil said, "We mentioned Manila Shield on Monday in anticipation of sporadic mass protests due to the public hearings being conducted in the Senate of Representatives and the Senate."

The House is deliberating the latest impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo, in which she stands accused of corruption, among other things, while the Senate is investigating the multi-billion-peso fertilizer fund scam in which government funds were allegedly diverted to the Arroyo's 2004 presidential campaign.

Both chambers are also looking into the "hello garci" scandal in which former top Philippine National Police officials are being probed for taking millions of pesos in public funds with them on a recent trip to Russia.

Bataoil said Manila Shield would ensure the protests would not hamper public services and the smooth flow of traffic.

"The activation of the shield is also a way to prevent criminal elements and terrorists from taking advantage of the situation while our men are focused on the mass protests," Bataoil said.

Manila Shield is usually activated when the President delivers the State of the Nation Address and when the police are placed on high alert.

Bataoil said the shield would remain until "it's appropriate to lift it."

Seminar takes courts, lawyers to digital age

By Delmar Carino
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THERE ARE NOW LAWYERS who bring laptops to the court rooms and make use of wireless technology to prove their case.

But can the courts, or the judges in particular, ready for them? Are e-mails and geographical data provided by, for instance, Google Earth, acceptable as evidence?

Questions on the use of modern technology in court were brought up by lawyers and public prosecutors who attended a one-day seminar on "Electronic Evidence (MCLE)" course at the Hotel Supreme/Saver yesterday.

The seminar, attended by more than 200 lawyers, was sponsored by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines Baguio-Benguet chapter and the University of the Philippines Law Center Institute of Judicial Administration.

Lawyer Mindy Cuesta-Alcher, Supreme Court deputy court administrator, said the E-Commerce Act of 2000 (Republic Act 8792) defined the admission of evidence of electronic documents that were generated, sent, received or stored by electronic or optical means.

Grey area

This would cover text messages, audio, video, photographs, phone conversations, the web.

However, the use of modern technology in court is still a gray area since the present law is silent on digital and Internet technology.

Alcher said the Supreme Court would be issuing the rules on electronic evidence it issued in July 2001 that would cover the latest developments in communication technology.

The person has penalties a difficult process before electronic evidence could be admissible in court.

"The generation of the evidence must be reliable, authentic, verified by a data base and the integrity of the source of evidence must be unquestionable," she said.

Admissible audio and information obtained from websites be accepted as evidence when it is proved that they might be limited to open court. Alcher advised lawyers to try.

She said the evidence could be presented but whether they would be admissible or not is another story.

"It all depends on whether they have a persuasive effect on the judge," Alcher said. "Also, admissibility of evidence is different from weight of evidence."

Google Earth

Bigate City Prosecutor Elmer Manuel Soppajo cited data from Google Earth, a software that displays satellite images of the Earth's surface, allowing users to see cities and perhaps down to their own view.

Soppajo wanted to know if satellite data displayed on the Internet could be used to capture actual online inspection made by courts on cases that required visiting places.

"But whether the court would take the data as a matter of judicial notice also leaves much to be desired," he said.

Lawyers in particular were observed that judges were not conversant to the technology. Neither were they updated on information technology.

"In fact, if you use Internet evidence, you could scare the hell or even antagonize the judge," one lawyer said.

He said if lawyers are required to complete the MCLE, then judges must also be required to complete similar training and should focus on the digital information technology.

Alcher said that judges, too, have their own version of the MCLE. But the schedule they have to attend is not compulsory.

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Ping Lacson: I had nothing to do with Dacer slay

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SEN. PANFILO LACSON YESTERDAY said he had nothing to do with the 2001 murders of publisher Salvador Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito, and warned undercover operatives of the Philippine National Police (PNP) against implicating him in the killings.

"I'm confident that the investigation will not lead to me. For the nth time, I'm telling you I had nothing to do with this," said Lacson.

The double murder case has again plagued the Arroyo administration after the report last week of suspended police Chief Supt. Eduardo Matillano and other Philippine National Police officials that Lacson was behind the killings.

Matillano and other PNP officials had been implicated in the killings by Rodolfo Aguinaldo, a former police officer who was convicted of the crime and is serving a life sentence at the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City.

Aguinaldo, in his affidavit, said Lacson ordered the killings because Dacer's newspaper was about to publish a story linking Lacson to the kidnapping of businessman Jose Eduardo Dee.

Dacer had written a series of articles about the Dee kidnapping, which Lacson allegedly masterminded.

Aguinaldo said Lacson ordered Matillano to "neutralize" Dacer and Corbito.

Lacson denied the allegations, saying Aguinaldo was only trying to get back at him for not helping him get a presidential pardon.

"I'm confident that the investigation will lead to the truth and the truth will set me free," he said.

Lacson said he was willing to undergo a lie detector test to prove his innocence.

He also said he was willing to undergo hypnosis to help him remember what he did on the night of the killings.

Lacson said he was at the Manila Polo Club in Forbes Park, Makati City, on the night of the killings.

He said he was willing to undergo hypnosis to help him remember what he did on the night of the killings.

Lacson

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Engineer cleared in Glorietta blast

THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS WITHdrawing the charges it filed against an engineer of the Makati Supermarket in connection with the explosion at the Glorietta mall on Oct. 15, 2007 that killed 11 people and injured 108 others.

Acting on separate petitions for review filed by various respondents, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez ordered Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño to withdraw, with the court's permission, the charges against Candelario Velderrama.

But the Justice secretary affirmed the findings of probable cause against 14 other respondents, most of them engineers of the Makati Supermarket, which holds the long-term lease on the property and maintenance personnel responsible for maintaining the basement where the explosion occurred.

Police investigators said the accident was caused by the explosion of methane gases that had accumulated in the basement area of the Glorietta 2, owned by Ayala Land, which should have been maintained and kept safe by the respondents.

In its resolution, the DOJ said that Velderrama had "exercised what is necessary and acted in accordance with the assigned responsibility required."

"In fact, the evidences point to the latter's compliance with the required degree of care in the performance of his duties, which is clearly inconsistent with a charge of reckless imprudence," it said.

The DOJ affirmed the finding of probable cause against Clifford Arriola, Ricardo Cruz, Joselito Ramaroromo, Charlie Nepomuceno, Jonathan Evora, Juan Nicolas and Miguel Velasco Jr. Sherman Bordadora.

GLORIETTA 2 after the blast

After US bailout, Citigroup allays depositors' fears

By Doris C. Dumlao

CITIGROUP YESTERDAY ASsured its clients and depositors in the Philippines their they would continue to be served and protected a day after the international banking giant was bailed out by the United States government which guaranteed most of the bank's $306 billion in potential losses in high-risk assets.

Citigroup officials in New York vowed to maintain its assets in emerging markets, allaying fears of asset sales in those markets.

To provide effective protection for depositors of the Citibank N.A. Philippine branch, the parent bank has fully guaranteed the peronga (peso) deposits of all local liabilities in accordance with Philippine laws, CE country business manager Mark Jones said in a letter sent to Philippine clients yesterday.

"We are confident in the strength of our firm, and yesterday's announcement will provide us with one additional step to further our capital base, reduce our future risk exposure, and reassure the market about CEO financial strength and ability to absorb credit losses," Jones said.

Too big to fail

Citigroup, the US's second largest bank with $2 trillion in assets, is thought to be too big to be allowed to fail and was rescued to avoid a collapse that could have caused financial havoc around the world.

In a result of the bailout, an additional $16 billion of capital has been lined up for the company, Jones said.

"While the global economic storm is still not over, this intervention brings even greater clarity to our overall financial strength and ability to deliver on the promise of this great institution," he said.

In the Philippines, Jones said Citibank was being regulated by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and as such, is subject to all prudential and other requirements applicable to all banks operating in the country.

He said Citibank had built up a capital base of over P33 billion as of end-September while its tier 1 or core capital of 25.7% several was much above the double the 10-percent minimum requirement prescribed by the BSP.

He said the bank had "extraordinary levels of liquidity" and its credit rating among the highest in the world for a financial institution.

Key decisions

"We've also made key decisions around our capital allocation, and as a result, our balance sheet is sturdier and more liquid. We've also reduced risky assets and have strengthened our risk management processes globally," he said.

Amid the US property downturn that has resulted in the worst credit crunch since the Great Depression of 1929, Citi has taken a loss on a significant amount of assets.

Citi, which has been serving customers in date, including the Philippines, for more than 100 years, has 4,000 employees in the Philippines. It plans to hire 1,000 more next year as it expands its local business processing outsourcing belt.

Wall Street, however, said down Citigroup stock last week on concerns that, unlike its rivals, it had not disabled up net profits in the last three quarters this year.

RP granted $65-M loan to soften climate change

THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT Bank (EIB) is to lend the Philippine government 50 million euros ($64.7 million) to help reduce climate change, officials said yesterday.

The EIB, the lending arm of the European Union, will extend the facility to the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines "which will manage a credit line for projects linked with climate change mitigation," said EIB vice president Carlos Da Silva Costa.

The credit line will be open on "fixed-rate terms, local currencies and local government" that have projects that could slow down global warming and climate change, he told Agence France-Presse.

This could include reforestation, water treatment, renewable energy and improved efficiency, especially on the transport sector, he said.

"It depends on the policy of the country and the willingness of the sector," Da Silva Costa said, adding that the European Union could also help by providing technical expertise and advice.

The EIB has already extended a 500 million euro facility to China for climate change mitigation, he said, adding this had gone into loans for wind farms, reforestation and energy efficiency projects.

A similar facility is being prepared for Vietnam, Da Silva Costa said.

"The EIB is in a position to bring to the Philippines long-term financing at favorable terms" despite the world financial turmoil, he said. AFP

Correction

IN THE NOV. 24 ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A20 misspelled the surname of the beauty queen who read "Eco-defenders" by the ASEAN Sustainable Energy Development Program in the Success Road-Along session held in Quezon City. Her name is Sheila Mae Espita—not Epsita.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in articles in the Inquirer, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati Ave., Makati City, fax No. 897-47-02-94, e-mail address: dcjohn@inquirer.com.ph.

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RP-US ties

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, November 26, 2008
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rev 15:1-4
Gospel: Lk 21:12-19

Jesus said to his disciples, "People will lay their hands on you and persecute you; you will be delivered to the Jewish courts and put in prison, and for my sake you will be brought before kings and governors. This will be your opportunity to bear witness.

"So keep this in mind: do not worry in advance about what to answer, for I will give you words and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

"You will be betrayed even by parents, and brothers, by relatives and friends, and some of you will be put to death. But even though you are hated by all for my name's sake, not a hair of your head will perish. Through perseverance you will possess your very selves."

Commentary:

Though difficult days lie in store for those who follow the Lord, we are not alone. The Lord promises to remain with us always, even until the end of the age. Furthermore, He promises that He will give us words to say when we are put to the test.

Consider matters here, take confidence in these words of Jesus and have persevered in the end despite having to endure persistent difficult and cruel events. By example and intercession He has exercise give us courage to live our faith to an age that is increasingly hostile to the Gospel.

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Plan to zap 2010 elections exposed

By [illegible] A.I.

Majority oppose Charter change, says SWS poll

PAPER WORK An employee of the House of Representatives distributes thick documents at the House's Halftobers the start of the impeachment hearing against President Arroyo. INQUIRER

ABIGAIL ROSWELL TALKS ABOUT CHARter change, a majority of Filipinos oppose amending the Constitution to extend the terms of the President, Vice President, senators and members of the House of Representatives, a survey by the Social Weather Stations found.

The October 2004 survey showed that 64 percent of adult Filipinos are opposed to amending the Constitution and allowing President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to hold her post after June 30, 2010.

"The survey also found that most Filipinos do not wish to change it now and very few wish to extend the present allowable terms of office of the President, the Vice President, senators and representatives," SWS said in a statement released yesterday.

Seventy-eight percent (78 percent) in Metro Manila, 76 percent in the Visayas, 62 percent in Luzon outside Metro Manila and 54 percent in Mindanao are opposed to Charter change amending the President's term.

Sixty-seven percent in socioeconomic class ABC, 66 percent in class D and 63 percent in class E are also against Charter change.

Nationwide, the survey found 63 percent saying the President's present term of office is "just right as it now," About a third (32 percent) want to shorten it, while 5 percent want it lengthened.

For the term of the Vice President, 56 percent say it is just right, 39 percent want it shortened and only 5 percent want it lengthened.

In the case of senators, 61 percent say their term of office is just right, 32 percent say it should be shortened, while 6 percent say it should be lengthened.

As for members of the House, 62 percent say their term is just right, 26 percent want it shortened and 11 percent want it lengthened.

"Over the past several years, most Filipinos have always been opposed to any constitutional changes that extend the President's stay in office," SWS said.

The survey, conducted from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4 using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults. The respondents were drawn from a nationwide random sample of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Alleging widespread cheating in the 2004 elections, a group of lawyers led by Atty. Romulo Macalintal has filed a petition asking the Supreme Court to declare unconstitutional the automated election system (AES) that was used in the May 10 polls.

Macalintal, a former election lawyer of Arroyo's opponent Fernando Poe Jr., said the AES violates the provision in the Constitution that mandates the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to conduct a manual count of votes.

Macalintal said the Comelec's decision to use the AES was "tainted with grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction."

Named respondents in the petition are Comelec Chairman Benjamin Abalos and the seven commissioners.

Macalintal said the Comelec violated the Constitution when it failed to conduct a manual count of votes in the May elections.

He said the poll body also violated the Constitution when it failed to conduct a manual audit of the results of the AES.

Macalintal said the Comelec violated the Constitution when it failed to conduct a manual audit of the results of the AES.

He said the Comelec

Farmers hit dispersal of protest camp

By Alexis Pupa

FARMERS FROM SURIGAO DENOUNCED yesterday the violent dispersal of their protest camp in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Quezon City, resulting in injuries to four persons.

In a statement, the peasant federation Task Force Mapalad said at least 37 protesters camped outside the DENR were still sleeping when DENR security personnel came at them with clubs and tried to dismantle their tents around 5 a.m.

A minor scuffle ensued leading to injuries to Ibad Pangan, 34; Lauel Amandoy, 27; Joselito Dingada, 44, and Rolando Dacion, 58. They suffered bruises and broken ribs in clubbing, the organization said.

TFM president Jose Rodito Arguelles called the dispersal "a treacherous act conducted while the farmers were asleep." He said the group were scheduled to meet with DENR Undersecretary Manuel Gerochi regarding their demand for community-based forest management (CBFM) grants in three areas in Masbate, Bukidnon.

Back at DENR

"The dispersal shows the inability of the DENR to address the concerns of the farmers. Unfortunately, this reflects on the leadership of Secretary Lito Atienza," Arguelles added.

The farmers have since set up their tents and are back in front of the DENR.

For his part, Gerochi said he had yet to get a definitive picture of what really happened during the dispersal.

"The incident is really unfortunate. There seems to be a misunderstanding on both our sides," Gerochi said the farmers. He said he would investigate the matters.

The farmers are demanding action on their long-pending applications for community-based forest management (CBFM) covering the Villaline Ranch located in Barangays Pandanan and Esperanza; the Bedlig-Allan Uy Ranch located in Barangay Pandanan; and the Gonyo Ranch located in Barangays Cuya and Barangasan.

CBFM allows members of local communities to undertake sustainable forestry programs in their areas. The farmers claim the ranch leases have long expired.

Oscar Blanigas, chairman of the TFM affiliate Hijonan Bukidnon, denied claims of security guards that they were blocking the DENR gates, saying they were camped out on the left side of the DENR gate and were not obstructing any movement of other people or vehicles into and from the DENR offices.

He also added that Gerochi was having a hard time answering issues raised by the group in the processing of their CBFM applications.

But Gerochi said the DENR is working to address the issue. "We want to give due process for all parties and resolve this matter in the soonest possible time."

The farmers have written Atienza to immediately deny the application of Villaline Ranch for renewal of its forest land grazing lease agreement (FLGLA), which they say expired 11 years ago.

Minor 'flap' forces jumbo jet to return

A LOS ANGELES-BOUND JUMBO JET WAS forced to return to Manila shortly after takeoff due to a mechanical problem yesterday but was able to fly again a few hours later.

Airport officials said Northwest Airlines Flight 012 took off at 7:35 a.m. but turned back after the pilot "monitored a mechanical problem on the wing flap."

It landed at 8:48 a.m. at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Octavio Lina, Naia deputy manager, said the problem on the Boeing 747 was "minor" and that there were no reports that the plane had trouble while in air.

Northwest Airlines said engineers fixed the technical problem on the left wing flap and performed routine maintenance for three hours in Naia.

Lina said the plane took off again at 1:55 p.m. with no hitch.

The plane, which was bound for Los Angeles via Narita, Japan, had 401 passengers and 14 crew members.

Arbolario; 62

HONORIO PARDO ARBOLARIO, MEMBER of the Board of Regents of the West Negros University in Bacolod City, died on Nov. 23 at 62.

He is survived by his wife Maria Lilia Limson-Arbolario; children Miguel Wilkins, Jeremy Neil, and Anne Grace; daughter-in-law Catherine Vida; grandson Harlow Miguel; siblings and their spouses Susana and Noy Aguirre, Wilmore and Ruth Arbolario, and Lolita and Jay Delfin; and sister-in-law Lali Limson and her fiancé Manny Chavez.

There will be a necrological service at 2 p.m. today at the Bethel Center, Baptist Conference Church, Lacson Street in Bacolod. Interment will follow at the Bacolod Memorial Park.

Where's the beef? GMA ally twits opposition

From page A1

that at one point they threatened to walk out, briefly disrupting the four-hour proceedings.

From the start, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman underscored the need for both parties to stick to facts. The committee's vice chair said that discussions should be limited to overt and personal acts, not just acts of subalterns, hate mongers, praetorians, informers and locsenistas.

Lagman said that the impeachment complaint was doomed to fail not because "the majority will outvote them with numbers but with superiority of rhyme and reason and ascendancy of logic."

Negros Oriental Rep. George Arnaiz said the allegations against the President were all "hearsay" as they were based on newspaper reports and that the charges were committed by his subordinates that could not be traced to her personally.

Arnaiz said that the complainants failed to provide evidence that the President signed the scuttled $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) contract with China's ZTE Corp.; that the Supreme Court had ruled that there was no fraud in the 2004 elections in the Lozada versus Dr. Cruz case; and that the "Hello Garci" tapes were inadmissible as evidence.

No proof of culpability

Rep. Simeon Datumanong picked apart charges that the President was culpable in the Northrail project and in alleged extrajudicial killings.

Datumanong pointed out that even former Speaker Jose de Venecia, who spoke at length on Monday on the Northrail project, in his endorsement of the complaint had declared the projects were valid and above board.

On the alleged political killings, he said that "command responsibility cannot and should not be made a basis for an administrative, criminal or impeachable offense."

Walkout

"The complainants failed to show any proof that the (President) committed the said acts either as principal (by inducement, direct participation, or indispensable cooperation), accomplice or accessory," Datumanong said.

The hearing was suspended for more than 30 minutes short by after remaining from heads broke when Minority Leader Rolando Zamora fell that one administration ally had gone too far in defense of the President.

Zamora called an "insult" the claim

THE WALKOUT Former Speaker Jose de Venecia and Rep. Teodoro Casiño (L) walk out of the hearing of the House committee on justice when its members started citing technicalities and legalities in an obvious attempt to kill the impeachment complaint against President Arroyo. RAFFY LERMA

of Rep. Elpidio Barzaga that the impeachment complaint was falsified as it was notarized on Oct. 10 before it was prepared on Oct. 11. He asked the committee chair, Quezon City Rep. Matias Defensor, to scratch the remark from the record.

When Defensor refused, claiming he was not competent to pass judgment on Barzaga's allegation, a visibly irked Zamora strode out, followed by the seven minority congressmen.

After Defensor and Lagman coaxed Barzaga to drop his charge, Zamora and the other minority members returned to their seats, except for De Venecia and Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III.

'Immature tantrum'

Zamora later said Barzaga should have raised the issue when the impeachment complaint was being endorsed for its sufficiency in form. "He did not request him to say that and even his peers were surprised."

Malacañang officials branded the walkout as a show of "immature maneuvers."

"They're showing to the people that they don't want to hear what they're hearing," deputy spokesperson Anthony Golez said.

De Venecia later told reporters that the charge of falsification was a big insult to the complainants and was proof that the administration was bent on derailing the impeachment complaint by whatever means.

He said he regretted the majority re-

sulted refuge in technicalities but he maintained that these were not enough.

"Our accusations were very specific, concrete, backed by pictures that do not lie. That is what really happened, why would I remonstrance you, dance?" De Venecia said.

Zamora said that the biggest amendment done was the First couple's presence in the ZTE headquarters in China as witnessed and documented by De Venecia on Nov. 2, 2006.

De Venecia said the President's presence in the board room of a company bidding for a project was "irregular."

He said that Ms. Arroyo's failure in stop the project even after being told of the alleged P200-million bribe offered by former Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos to former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri betrayed her bias for the Chinese firm.

'Miracles do happen'

"Even if they claim that the contract did not push through, the offenses have already been committed, schemers have been given," De Venecia said. "You cannot legalize something that is illegal."

The committee will continue its hearing today with Zamora making a summary of the minority's defense of the impeachment and Lagman speaking for the administration. After interpellation, the committee members will vote on whether the complaint is sufficient in substance.

The committee decision will be up for plenary voting by the entire House membership on Tuesday with Zamora hopeful that the minority could at least get one-third vote to keep the impeachment complaint alive.

"What is important is we will debate regardless of the vote. He will come out in plenary. We are not expecting that much as the majority vote always is ... But we have to believe that miracles do happen," Zamora said.

GMA not bothered

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Ms Arroyo, who attended the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' summit in Peru, wasn't bothered by the impeachment proceedings.

"The President is used to these political developments," he said over dzRH. "But that doesn't mean we are ignoring them."

Ermita said it was too premature for Ms Arroyo to respond to these charges because the process has just started.

"It is not timely to answer anything now lest we will be accused of interfering in the affairs of Congress," he said.

With a report from TJ Burgonio

'Methuselah' likens Gloria to Jesus Christ

From page A1

Garcia used Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia.

"More than 2,000 years ago, our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified because of an opinion survey. Pontius Pilate presented our Lord to the crowd and said, 'Whom would you prefer, Barabas or Christ to crucify?' Our Lord Jesus Christ lost in the survey. Is that how we are going to judge our President because of an opinion survey?" Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia said during yesterday's impeachment hearing.

Former House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., the complainant's star witness, used that comparing Ms Arroyo with Jesus was "something it was not."

"We should not take the name of our God, Jesus, lightly. We should not compare Gloria to Jesus who is our Lord God. President Arroyo is not our God," De Venecia said in an interview with reporters during a break in the hearing.

'Bizarre'

Garcia used Jesus' crucifixion to debunk what he claimed was the "most bizarre and ludicrous" allegation in the impeachment complaint filed by 6 groups led by De Venecia's son-Joey, being hidden in the number 1080 (ITE) deal.

The impeachment complaint charged that the public did not believe the President's denial that she cheated in the 2004 elections, citing a January 2006 poll which found that majority of Filipinos in Mindanao believed that the President stole the vote.

"Since when in this country is a person convicted of an offense as a result of an opinion survey? We have never learned one lesson," Garcia said in the course of his testimony which lasted nearly an hour.

Garcia said that this was the same as a judge asking the crowd in his court for their opinion on whether an accused was guilty or not and using the results for his ruling.

The impeachment complaint further stated that an indicator is inaccurate in quantifying the degree of public trust that the Filipino people have felt under respondent's administration that surveys on respondent's trust ratings.

Garcia pointed out the betrayal of public trust in the Constitution referred to a violation of an oath of office, not just simply losing the trust of the people in a survey.

"Public officer may have committed a betrayal of public trust and yet in the survey he may be acing high. I think this is just a confusion in this complaint," Garcia said.

'Inconsistent witness'

Deputy presidential spokesperson Anthony Golez also downplayed De Venecia's testimony against Ms Arroyo at the impeachment hearing, portraying him as the "inconsistent witness."

"So," Golez said when asked if Malacañang expected De Venecia to repeat the role played by then Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson in the downfall of President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

"We see him as a witness who says one thing right now, and says another thing the following day," he said. With a report from TJ Burgonio

Be counted, young voters urged

By Kristine L. Alave

YOUNG FIRSTTIME voters could make or break a presidential candidate's chances in the coming elections, with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and poll watchdogs anticipating an increase in their number by 2010.

At the launch of the youth voters' registration drive called "Bagong Bida, Ito Ako Change" at the Comelec headquarters in Manila yesterday, National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) Chair Henrietta de Villa said they expect an increase of two million youth voters added to the estimated nine million who participated in the 2007 midterm elections.

With young voters numbering 11 million, De Villa said they could be a formidable bloc in 2010. Around 33 million voted for Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election, she added. "If you have 20 million votes, you already have a base. It would be difficult for your opponents to catch-up."

If a candidate gets the majority of the youth vote, he or she can easily win the presidency, De Villa said.

"I'm telling the youth: find they can install a President in Malacañang, if they vote responsibly and if they vote as a group. In the United States, they were the swing vote. They studied to make a difference."

De Villa, who is also chair of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, said that registering as a voter is the first step to being a responsible voter. "We advocate that voting is both a right and a responsibility and it starts with that decision and duty to register," she said.

Starting Dec. 2, the Comelec will set up satellite offices in various schools nationwide to help Smoked and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting encourage young people to participate in the electoral process.

De Villa and Comelec Cabral, University of Santo Tomas public and alumni affairs director, said they are encouraging the youth to make informed choices on whom to vote for. "In the 2010 elections, the change is not just in the face of the elections, but also in the quality of the candidates who will be voted into office," De Villa said.

Cabral said a 107 survey on youth's attitudes on politics revealed there was a general sense of "apathy" toward politics among young voters. The schools participation in the Bagong Bida progress, she said, should "educate our students to become responsible and mature voters heading into 2010 and hopefully for the rest of their lives."

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OPINION

Constitutional menace

EDITORIAL

GENERALLY OVERLOOKED BY THE PUBLIC YESterday was the public hearing conducted in the House of Representatives on Charter change. During that hearing, the problematic approach of the Arroyo administration to constitutional amendments became obvious.

Speaking for the principled supporters of Charter change, former UP president Jose Abueva said he preferred the election of delegates to a constitutional convention in 2010. Most other resource persons preferred the election of delegates after 2010. Both opinions are pretty much in keeping with public opinion as far as amending or revising the Constitution is concerned.

The League of Cities, on the other hand, said that its members favored a constitutional convention by November 2009—that is, within the month that's about to end—but failing that, they favor exploring all other means to change the Constitution. Since their proposal is obviously impossible, it means they support whatever means can be found, to amend, revise, or even replace, the Constitution before 2010.

Congressmen at the hearing generally kept mum. But lawyer Neri Colmenares caused a stir by pointing to the different resolutions filed at the House, proposing changes to the Constitution. The most controversial of these, House Resolution 830, proposes the extension of the terms of all incumbents, including that of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and postponing the 2010 polls to June 30, 2011.

Another resolution proposes the abolition of term limits. Yet another proposes replacing the current three-year term of congressmen with a four-year term as was the case from 1940 to 1972. And yet another is possibly as controversial as House Resolution 560: Senate Resolution 14 proposes to eliminate the Supreme Court's post-1935 power to intervene in, and review, allegations of a grave abuse of discretion on the part of officials.

The President's eldest son, Pampanga Rep. Mikey Arroyo, himself tried to push forward an argument that was in line with Speaker Prospero Nograles' own proposal to amend the existing constitutional limitations on foreign ownership of land. "If we liberate this barrier of foreign ownership," the Arroyo son said, "more investors will come into our country and have more control of our money. That's what they have been saying. I'm only interested in that specific provision."

We wonder if the next ruling lawmaker to be made a President slips.

To be sure, these are all merely proposals that have yet to be debated before they can actually be voted upon by the House. They do, however, indicate, in broad strokes, the motivations—and aspirations—of congressmen in pushing for Charter change at this time. They indicate, further, what is problematic about the whole Charter change debate at present. The cart has been put before the horse. The House is moving, focused on securing enough votes to be able to argue before the Supreme Court that in the specific case of constitutional amendments, the entire composition of Congress—House and Senate combined—without need of formal convocation, and deliberately without voting separately, can act to propose such changes.

What those changes are, no one quite knows, except in the broadest strokes—and depend strictly on whom you ask. So the public cannot figure out if this is truly for the sake of reform or purely for the promotion of self-interest and the convenience of incumbents. And House members wonder why there is a deep unease throughout the land concerning what they're up to?

It is obvious that the House intends to pursue Charter change, relying on its expectations that it will get a favorable ruling from the Supreme Court, and that public opinion would not matter because the public is powerless to do anything to stop them. The House is keeping the discussion vague, precisely to prevent people from organizing or acting—at least, not until the cause of the House is armed with a favorable Supreme Court decision.

A clear constitutional menace is presenting itself. A smokescreen of dissembling, combined with the expectation that the holiday season will dull public interest, has been thickly laid.

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We need a disciplinarian as president

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

AT THE POSTFORUM COFFEE TALK AT THE Kapihan in Manila last Monday, the question was asked, "Who would make an ideal president after GMA in 2010?" Not necessarily who would win but who would make a good president?

The answer was not hard to come by; other than Ayatollah Lacson or Mayor Erap Estrada, who would be a more suitable president than Senator Richard Gordon? He is a disciplinarian and do not confuse wrongdoers for the rule of votes or popularity. The consensus was that what the Philippines needs now after the series of failed presidents is one who would impose discipline on our people so that we would have an orderly and law-abiding society.

Lacson and Estrada both lift the bill. Lacson was the only PNP chief who was able to impose discipline on policemen. Recovered carnapped vehicles, which policemen routinely illegally used for themselves, were returned promptly to their owners. Policemen with big bellies became of duty and all the free food and drinks were forced to exercise and shed weight. Suddenly, a cop's waistline was very important, as with how far and how long he could jog. Hold-ups, the crime rate, particularly serious crimes like bank robberies and carnapping, went down. When Lacson ceased to be police chief, the crime rate went back up and cops stopped big bellies increased again. None of the police chiefs who came after him were able to duplicate Lacson's achievements.

As for Estrada, he is the only public official who was able to remove vendors from the sidewalks, squatters from streets and riverbanks, and dissidents' drives—to a certain extent. After he removed them on Edsa, a little order has come to it. When cars are forcibly half-empty honking during the rush hour (before you whipped out your tax passport), how else would they earn?), last wording there out is not the job of the MMDA but of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB). I don't think the number of buses plying Edsa can ever be reduced as long as there are fares in the LTFRB who follow up applications for franchises and make sure that they are approved—if the price is right.

But there are still squatters and sidewalk vendors on the streets, you say. Yes, but that is because of squatter and vendor coddlers in the persons of local government officials. Try to oust squatters and vendors and you would have congressmen and councilors swarming to protect the lawbreakers. They are the voters who make them officials. This is not to say that confrontation between the MMDA and the politicos coddlers, the former always wins because it is enforcing the law. The politicians want the lawbreakers to continue violating the law.

There is one more reason vendors are back in droves on the sidewalks and streets. Christmas is coming. Local officials want them to earn that Christmas so they give them permits to vend during the Christmas season. That is why vendors are clashing Bankard's streets again after the MMDA had a difficult time clearing them; it is still in the spirit of Christmas, according to local officials. The trouble is, we have the longest Christmas season in the world, and long after it is over, the vendors and the local officials forget to close the sidewalks again.

Cpl. Lacson and Fernando reprise in the whole country what they have done to the PNP and Metro Manila: Can they impose the same discipline on the whole nation?

Why not? The PNP is a national organization, and Lacson was able to discipline it. Fernando had put order in his native Marikina (there are no squatters in Marikina) before he became MMDA chair. He has imposed—to the same thing as the whole Metro Manila. And if he is able to discipline Metro Manila, there is no reason he cannot do the same to the whole country.

But can they win? Squatters, vendors and drivers hate Fernando like nobody's business. There's a big clamor of voters that Fernando has self-interest there is a bigger clamor of voters who admire him for his efforts to bring order to the land. The squatters and drivers are noisy; they are organized, he says, but the silent majority far outnumbers them.

But Fernando is away behind in the surveys. That's because he is known mostly in Metro Manila, he says. That will change, hopefully, he adds, with his fingers crossed.

What about Lacson? He already lost a presidential election. Yes, but so did Richard Nixon. Never but to John F. Kennedy, but came back to win the presidency years later.

Besides, he is afraid of Lacson. They are afraid all those stories about him are true. Ah, but that's exactly what they are: mere stories. None has been proven to be true. It is easy to tell stories. And isn't it better that people are afraid of him instead of taking him for granted? Does he have enough discipline if the people are not afraid of him?

How about the other presidential aspirants? How do they measure up?

Well, the people are also afraid of Sen. Manny Villar. They are afraid that if he becomes president, he will end up removing half of the Philippines. People like Sen. Miriam Santiago, but they are afraid of Korina Sanchez. People also like Senators Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero and Richard Gordon, but have you heard them say what they plan to do if they become president?

• • •

KAPIHAN NOTES. There will be no Kapihan in Manila this coming Monday, a holiday. Former President Joseph Estrada will be a guest in a forthcoming Kapihan.

The Christmas party of Partido, the association of genuine journalists, will be held on Dec. 3 at Pan Pacific Hotel.

Full of it

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

As I last when Pandilo gave the loller money back, you could be sure he was spouting something he got. When Joe de V offers to give back the P900,000, preferably to be placed under the hands of the CBCP you get this image of the owner of the latest Mercedes Benz flipping a P1-coin to a search point on her boy. Which makes you ponder the metaphysical questions as well. Which is the greater crime, being crooked or being beat (cheap)?

In fact, the only thing Joe de V may not be dishonest outright in if he is willing, like Cheryl Simpson, to go to jail with GMA. Of course, he did reveal in the House that GMA spent hundreds of millions to not get impeached, but he was careful to appear as victim rather than complainant. Hell, he was more than cooperative. He was an architect. He was head of Lakas and the speaker of the House when it happened. Why he was so powerless to stop that, well, his ability to sagip the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, let alone tell it, has been in much suspect as UNIDO.

If Joe de V seems to calm, necessarily, he should be willing to implicate himself. Imelda Marcos ripped Simpson's reputation to shreds during his opening statement at Enrile's impeachment trial, demanding to know who was behind under the sword of truth and beyond law and thief. The answer was: Because it was the word of a self-confessed liar and thief. When the pot calls the kettle black, it has a point about the kettle being black—but it helps to press its points to admit being black itself. Simpson's testimony did go all the way to prove Imelda's charges, and then some. Enrile forgot the other part of his vow, which was to go down with him. He not only did not share a pail of soft with Erap, he did not share with him his spoils from Mercronik and other assorted stolen with which to lure us Manny Pacquiao.

Joe de V's efforts at distancing himself from the monumental perfidies of his making, or participating, or orchestrating, do not just make him unbelievable, they make him laughable. Indeed, his unwarranted assertions as a leader of a moral reformation movement make him, well, inviting.

There are limits to the suspension of disbelief even of Filipinos. We do not numerically outnumber our countrymen, even if they've done so in favor of being oppressed themselves. We might have been willing to not prosecute Juan Ponce Enrile after Edsa I for his crimes as Marcos' right hand man, but we certainly were not willing to make him president. We might have been willing to not jail Gregorio Ablay (Edsa I for his crimes as Enrile's right hand man, but we certainly were not willing to make him senator. We may be willing to pretend Joe de V still exists, but we certainly cannot be willing to vote Imsay him as our savior.

If Joe de V seriously believes he should go to the house of the senator and tell the world what he knows about the stealing of the vote. That is the original sin, all the others, despite being mortal, are derivative. He was head of Lakas when the plot to and GMA's victory in 2004 was hatched. He was a party to that plot. Perjury-targeting the Ombudsman or the author of the NBN project, mind only tugging him as the author of a bigger scam, which is the theft of the presidency itself. Forget talking about what it took for GMA to prevent her being impeached, mind only revealing what it took for GMA to re-invade Malacañang in the first place.

All that, of course, makes him vulnerable to the same things Estrada Mendoza said about Chavit. But at least he can be listened to, at least he can be believed. At least he can always tell that Pandilo's promises are the brilliant calls him a liar from the depths of St. Luke's while suffering from diarrhea.

"You're so full of it."

Tale of two whistle-blowers

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ROMBOID[L] ESCAPED BY FORMER Speaker Jose de Venecia supporting the alleged bribery attempts by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to buy congressional support to kill a "shoo" impeachment complaint in the summer run with the appeal of former Bicol Rep. Leo "Leo Chavez" Siapno on Oct. 4, 2000, accusing then President Joseph Estrada of taking bribes from gaming lords.

Siapno, a drinking and gambling buddy of Estrada, blew the whistle on Estrada the day after a group of hostile armed police tried to assassinate Siapno in the evening of Oct. 3 in a dark spot on Isaac Peral Street in Ermita, Manila. Two police officers stopped Siapno's car and ordered him to get out on his way to his office, after a meeting with municipal mayors in Bicol to line up United Nationalist Alliance. Believing his life was in risk, Siapno blew the whistle, setting in motion a congressional investigation into corruption charges and triggering an impeachment complaint against the President.

Last Friday, De Venecia, a long-time ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, exploded a bombshell with the publication of his biography wherein he denounced the President for allegedly bribing congressmen to kill impeachment. Their support for a "clean" impeachment complaint to shield her against a stronger complaint in the House of Representatives.

Both Siapno and De Venecia presented the so-called "smoking gun" to substantiate their accusations. Siapno presented the "smoking gun" in front of Estrada in the Senate downstairs on the joining pay-offs, and De Venecia, at the House hearings on an impeachment complaint before committee on justice.

De Venecia told his colleagues in the hearing that on March 11, 2007, he received P900,000 in cash from the President, part of what he claimed to be a P1.08 million fund to buy himself "legal protection" from moves to impeach her for at least a year. De Venecia said the President invited him and other congressmen as well as local government officials to a breakfast meeting in Malacañang where "many were given P500,000 in large, brand-new dove envelopes." He said "President dumps gold upon hundreds, maybe a hundred million pesos, authorizing officials to disburse cash were authorized by [Budget and] Gov. Joe [Executive Secretary Eduardo] Ermita and Peping [Budget Secretary Rolando] Andaya ... [Manila] Rep. Benny Abante and Cebu] Rep. Tony Cuenco and [Deputy Speaker] Eduardo Ermita."

De Venecia said nothing more. He contradicted witnesses in his office, but he supplied the motive. He said, "The President is spending a fortune just to buy legal protection for one year. The bribe money ... was her way of purchasing legal protection because of the Supreme Court decision that an impeachment case can be only filed by one vote."

De Venecia also testified at the House hearings on the alleged anomalous bid award of the NBN-ZTE project to win the government efforts to block the impeachment complaint against her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, and then Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos. He said he told the President that "the NBN deal is not for the first time derailed several corruption scandals of the Arroyo administration, including the $329-ZTE deal and the Northrail project.

Doronila have been impressed that De Venecia's smoking gun would have as much impact as Siapno's was running. The revelation of De Venecia's testimony is that it came too late and after he had been named as speaker. His falling out with the President was provoked by the fact that he refused not in the competition over the $184-ZTE project. De Venecia has a vested interest in his son's unprofitable investment against the President now being forced by the administration pressure to become if it is sufficient to advantage for endorsement.

Siapno's case gained momentum after Sen. Teofisto Guingona delivered his famous "I Accuse" speech against Estrada on Nov. 13, 2000. There was a general revulsion against corruption in the Estrada administration. Anna Dominguez backed Guingona's appeal and the business community rose up to join against the Estrada regime.

President Arroyo has relatively fuller control of the House, where her coalition greatly outnumbers the opposition. She has the support of the 180 Arroyo-friendly from rank-and-file public opposition, but she enjoys unchecked support in the business community. Also the Catholic hierarchy is divided in its support of Mrs Arroyo, and it has politically astute and prepped than it was under the leadership of his predecessor, Jaime Cardinal Sin. The resolution of the Philippines has blasted the edges of movements to impeach the President or remove her through people power.

Whether or not De Venecia's "smoking gun" can stir up public outcry against the regime remains to be seen. The House has thrown out the impeachment complaint before committee on justice on the grounds cited in the fourth impeachment complaint, including the $184-ZTE project, the alleged bribery of congressmen to support it, "graft and corruption committed, and human rights violations.

The committee on justice under Siapno met a move by a group bloggers to strengthen the impeachment complaint by including as a ground the impeachment the Mendiola incident of September 29, 1987, when the Philippine National Police fired on a rally of farmers demanding land reform, which the Supreme Court declared in unconstitutional and ordered the arrest of those responsible. Human rights groups want to drive public protest and even the impeachment complaint with the testimony De Venecia's revelations. There is little evidence so far that these revelations have any significant shock effect.

Name that flower

I WAS SO THRILLED TO READ LAST WEEK ABOUT THE discovery of a new flower species in Lobo, Cagayan, which has been named Rafflesia leonardo.

There were two reasons for me to be especially excited. First, the plant has been named after Filipino botanist Leonardo Co, whom I have known for years because of our common interest in medicinal plants. Leonardo's interest in the entire plant kingdom and his endless thirst for knowledge, made me, way through junior high level, sort of inspire me to run out of campus to look for flowers in the Philippines to find the most obscure plants. He is particularly good with locals, which always all took skills to say but he can spot right away the smallest differences in the leaves.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The second reason why I'm entertained over this discovery is that the Rafflesia genus is so spectacular, existing in flowers without roots, stems or leaves, yet producing large flowers. The world's largest flowering species is Rafflesia arnoldi, found in Indonesia and reaching a diameter of 100 centimeters. The Rafflesia flowers are said to smell like rotting meat, thus earning them the name "corpse flowers," and which then helps to pollinate the flowers.

Rafflesia leonardo is one of eight species identified in the Philippines. It was recorded to have a diameter of 20 cm. in the papers, but Leonard told me it's only 40 to 50 cm. still quite large.

Studying other Rafflesia leonardi did make me think about how one more media don't give enough attention to the discoveries of new flora and fauna in the Philippines. We seem to be more interested to discoveries of new stars, and I don't mean the ones up in the sky.

Filipinos know very little about our biological diversity, which comes out of our being an archipelago, where islands are isolated from each other, allowing plants and animals to develop distinctly. I hope to do more articles about these biological wonders, but for today, I thought of tackling the scientific names.

Plants and angels

A hallmark of humans is our need to classify things around us, almost as if by giving order and name into our universe. The names used to label the creatures are often descriptive. The Chinese differentiate plants and animals for the ability to move: plants are 植物 (zhíwù) or cultured, and animals are 動物 (dòngwù) or movers. The Cebuanos use "dili magkos," the not-human, to refer to organisms that are not animals, whether plants or fungi. Tagalog uses halaman to refer to plants, from a halaman to herbaceous.

Human scientists have come down to earth universe, having their hands full with the thousands of creatures we have. The naming and classification system we use comes from the Swedish Carl Linnaeus, where 2010's 250th anniversary year. He published his 10th Linnean system, which has gone through many modifications, as new are revealed found.

The biological classification system is quite elaborate, consisting of several levels. Humans belong to the Kingdom Animalia, the phylum Chordata (meaning having a notochord), class Mammalia, order Primates (which we share with apes and monkeys), family Hominidae, genus Homo, and species sapiens.

With humans, most scientists use a family name and a first name. With biological scientific names, the most important is the genus and species. The genus name is Rafflesia. Rosas, always has a capitalized first letter while the species name (e.g. sapiens, leonardi) are not capitalized.

The naming procedure is complicated. The plant is set, and has to be first compared with others that have already been described to make sure it is indeed new, it gets name may be the species level, such as this new Rafflesia, which means of a species. The genus name (e.g. Rafflesia, Rosas),

Congressman blamed for hellish roads of E. Samar

LETTERS

WE FULLY SHARE THE SENTIMENTS expressed in a letter by Bishop Crispin B. Varquez and more than 40 priests (Inquirer, 11/21/10) regarding the worsening condition of the national highway in Eastern Samar.

We learned that DPWH has a regular monthly budget of P1.3 million for the maintenance of the national highways. We ask: Where is the maintenance fund being used or misused? The bungalowing functionaries of Eastern Samar for basketcase than part of the maintenance fund is being used to pay the salaries of casual employees and other expenditures of the Congressional District Office.

We believe that this is highly unconscious. We all know that the DPWH District Office is "controlled" by the congressman. It is the congressman who dictates who will be assigned as district engineer. It is widely believed that it is the congressman who decides on major issues in the DPWH District Office, such as hiring and promotion of regular and casual employees, and the determination of winning bidders of contracts, among others.

We also deplore the purchase of about P60 million worth of road signs instead of using the money to buy cement or asphalt. Under the law, the governor has no jurisdiction over the national highway. But because of the recurring claims of the general public on the need to intend to the national highway, Gov. Sitti Elsie Ivon Tan-Ong (at least 1 more with the Sanggunian Panlalawigan to repair the national road.

An initial amount of P30 million was allocated by the province to help repair the national highway. Hence, on April 15, 2008, Governor Tan-Ong wrote a letter to DPWH to allow the province, using its fleet of heavy equipment, to help repair the national highway. However, we did not hear a word from the DPWH on the the letter request.

On May 8, 2008, Governor Tan-Ong followed up his request, but again nothing happened. We learned that our congressman has ordered the DPWH to block the request of Governor Tan-Ong. Reportedly because it will give him political "opposition" for defending to the dilapidated national highway.

Hence, the League of Municipalities, City ng mga Municipal and the Provincial Local opment Council decided to help in the repair of the national highway by way of patching the damaged portions, the congressman strongly objected.

In short, the congressman is not serious in helping repair the national highway.

—BYRON SEVEL
POS, district staff,
Eastern Samar.
eldorsegas_seven@yahoo.com

Tañada for senator in 2010: Run, Bobby, run

I AM USING ROMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE and former senator Wigberto "Bobby" Tañada to again reclaim his Senate position in 2010. I'm so disappointed with how so-called "Opposition" Senators Ping Lacson, Jamby Madrigal, Loren Legarda, Mar Roxas, Rodolfo Biazon, Francis Escudero and Miguel Zubiri do, could shamelessly support weak administration ally Sen. Jinn Petes Enrile for the Senate presidency.

How can we expect the Senate, which is an independent branch of government, to be nothing but a lapdog of Malacañang? We need somebody like Bobby Tañada in the Senate, not turncoats who think only of their personal interests.

—JOSE TAÑADA,
dotdtañada@yahoo.com

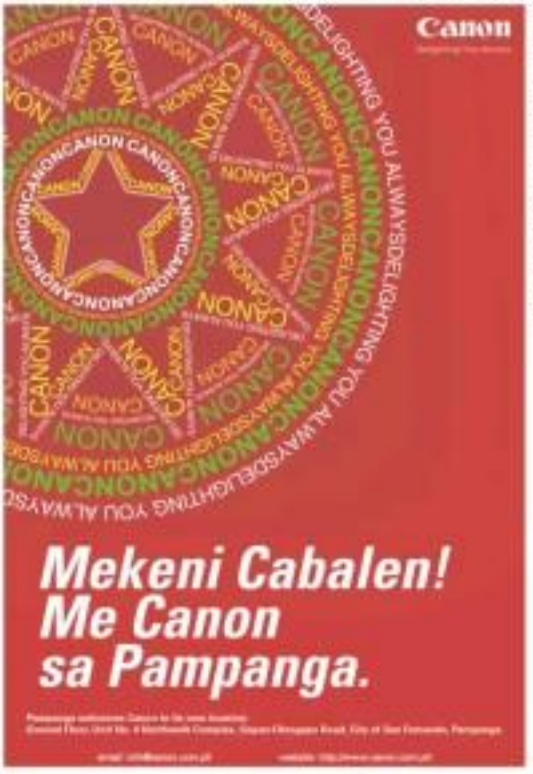
On Filipinos' preferential treatment of whites

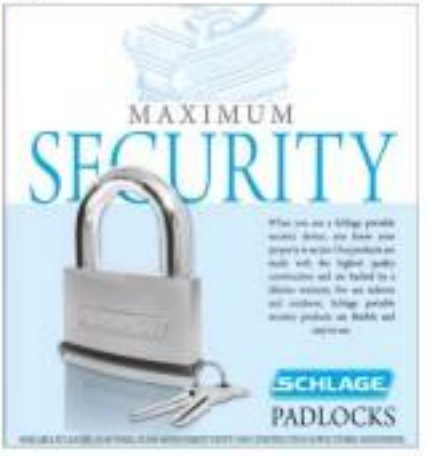
THIS IS A REACTION TO CONRADO LR. Quinto's column titled "Whitewashed." (Inquirer, 11/11/10) I've been living in Canada for the past seven years and Dr. Quirol's observation is spot on. I've been discussing racial issues with a co-worker who happens to be a Mail lady from Guyana. She observed that when Filipinos invite her to an occasion, they always want to set more warmly toward their white guests.

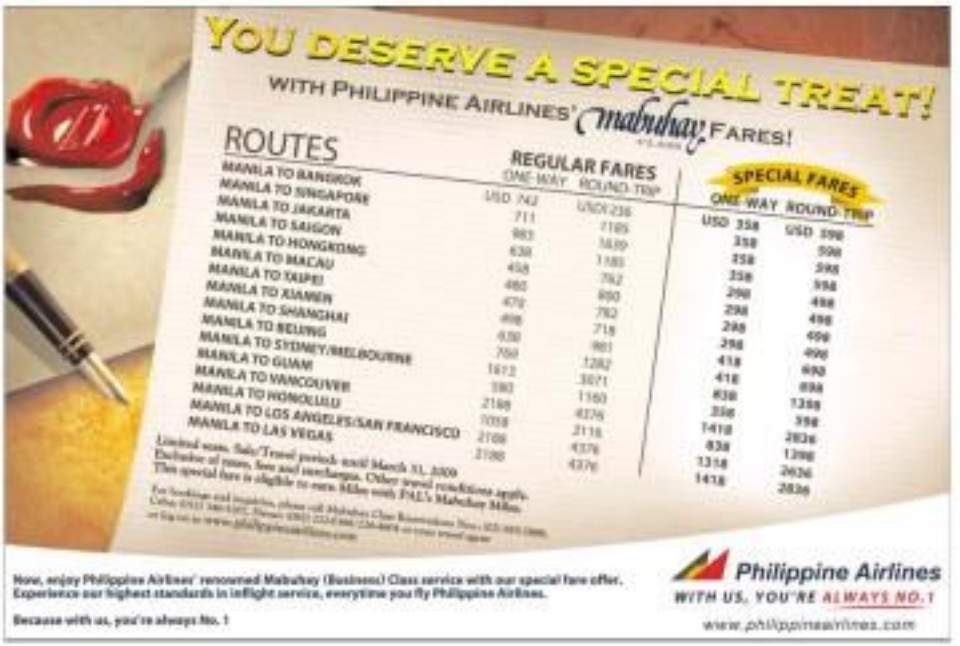
Seventeen is the beginning of wisdom. Maybe we should worry less about our lack of enthusiasm for an African-American US president since than our lack of tolerance and respect for our own ethnic minorities, i.e., the Aetas, the Tausūgs, the Ilonggos, etc.

Who cares about American presidents when we have so many problems of our own?

—GENE FABOL,
genfab@yahoo.com







Fil-American chef likely to keep White House job

From page A1

say idea what the job is about," Schelb says. "And they're temperamentally not suited for it. You have to be a person who has a real heart of service, and it can't be someone who needs to set themselves on fire."

Roland Mesnier, who retired in 2004 after 25 years as the White House's executive pastry chef, will never recommend a TV chef for the first family.

FIRST Lady Cora Aquino-Cojuangco Crameford from the University of the Philippines the White House executive chef in August, 2005, the first woman to serve in the job. INQUIRER

Celebrity chefs are entertainers

"Celebrity chefs, in my book, are not chefs. They're entertainers," Mesnier says. "If these people are TV? Forget it."

Crameford was a food technology major from the University of the Philippines.

A naturalized US citizen, she was born Cristeta Gomez Pasia in 1962 to Manuela, an assistance principal in a public elementary school in Manila, and Eduardo, a businessman.

First female executive chef

Crameford studied at the Padre Gomez Elementary School in Sta. Cruz, Manila, and finished her secondary education at Manila Science High School.

In 2005, under the administration of President George W. Bush, she became the first female executive chef at The White House.

A spokesperson for President-elect Barack Obama says it's too early to comment whether there will be a new executive chef. But outside speculation has focused on Art Smith, Oprah Winfrey's personal chef; NBA star Carmelo Anthony's personal chef, Daniel Vitale; and, who cooked for Obama at the Democratic National Convention; and Rick Bayless, whose Chicago restaurant Topolobampo is a favorite of Obama's.

At the same time, members of the Organic Consumers Association are organizing a letter-writing campaign urging Obama to announce healthy, sustainable and organic eating by hiring a well-known organic chef such as Nora Pouillon or Alice Waters.

None of the above would be a good fit, Schelb says.

"I get a kick out of all these people saying the No. 1 thing should be green, or sustainable or this, that or the other thing. They're missing the point. It's not about advancing your agenda. It's not about making some statement. It's not about getting your business promoted," he says.

"It's about serving the first family, first, last and in every way. That's the only job."

$100,000-a-year job

The head chef earns $100,000-$150,000 a year creating menus for state dinners, holiday functions, receptions and official luncheons hosted by the president and first lady.

Through the gala affairs are organizational challenges, Schelb says the greater challenge comes on the personal side—feeding the president, his family and guests.

Not just culinary skills

A White House chef's sensitivity and understanding is just as important as culinary skills, given that the chef is among the few people who interact with the first family in private, Schelb and Mesnier say.

"For the domestic staff—and for all the fancy titles, that's all the people in the residence are—how they treat the housemaster and sous-master of the first family is crucial. It makes doing a state dinner look easy," says Schelb, who has written a book and started a business planning private events near/at the White House.

"The challenge is how you give them everything they need and at the same time safeguard their heirlooms if they choose, but at the same time, not being antediluvian."

High marks for Crameford

Or as Mesnier puts it, "You have to be almost a clairvoyant, someone who can read a crystal ball and be able to judge what would they love today."

Both men give Crameford, the first attempt to serve as executive chef, high marks in that regard.

Neither believes she will be replaced, an opinion not shared by Tim Ryan, president of the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), which has sent several alumni (including Schelb) to the White House.

He believes the Obamas will relish the opportunity to make changes. He suggests another CIA grad as a candidate—John Storey, executive chef at New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel...but said Obama could also shake things up with a rotating cast of big name chefs for state dinners, much in the same way John F. Kennedy invited famed artists and performers to the White House.

"Chefs are great performers. So to take a page from Kennedy's play book and recognize the artistic performances of the culinary greats, each state dinner could be organized by different high profile chefs," he says. AP

US forces here to stay, says US envoy

From page A1

decoy on Jan. 20 after winning over John McCain of the Republican Party early this month.

Kenney explained that "it's the Armed Forces of the Philippines which will support whether it needs more or less [American] troops on a temporary basis."

But Herbert Docena of the Philippine-based Focus Global South said Obama's decision "testifies to the intention by the American people of Bush's militarist war on terror." He was referring to outgoing US President George W. Bush and his defense policy.

Anti-MFA groups

The Focus Global South and other groups campaigning against the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) are appealing to the new US president "to heed his people's clamor for peace by withdrawing troops in the Philippines."

Under the VFA, American soldiers are allowed temporary stay in the Philippines while training with their Filipino counterparts in warfare and counterinsurgency, particularly against the Jemaah Islamiyah-linked Abu Sayyaf.

Col. William Conkling, commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, said the US government could not ascertain plans to withdraw US troops from different parts of the world. Any movement in the US military will happen in January "once the new president is sworn in," he said.

'Double-talk'

"Ambassador Kenney and Colonel Conkling are experts in double-talk. When they claim that the US may depends on the AFP ... how can it drive the United States away when the AFP itself is standing down to stay permanently?" Docena said.

Conkling also said the Philippine military had shown "a very telling sign" during the counterinsurgency campaign.

"It has been[ ] noted lately [that] eleven [are] several Abu Sayyaf [members (who)] have been captured. They [Philippine military officials] are becoming more and more effective out there," he said.

"It's interesting to see that the people are the ones helping the military to capture these Abu Sayyaf Group criminals out there. That shows that whatever the government and the Philippine military are doing with the people is working, because they are wearing them work more," Conkling said.

US interests

But Docena said Conkling's remark about the AFP moves alongside with the US forces "is a categorical statement that the permanent stay of US troops in Mindanao is not merely to help defeat a few ASG, but more of its national interest is saw in it that US remains the sole superpower."

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bengcoy

OIC says Mindanao violence worsening

By Cynthia D. Rubrico

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE Islamic Conference (OIC) has expressed deep concern over increasing violence in Mindanao as a result of continued military operations against Moro guerrillas.

In a statement issued by Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, OIC secretary-general, recently, the OIC said the continued rapid military operations have resulted in the displacement of more than 500,000 civilians who now live in shelters in dire conditions.

Ihsanoglu warned that this could fuel extremism.

He urged the Philippine government and President Macapagal-Arroyo to return to the negotiating table to "work out creative solutions reaching agreements with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the requirements of the Supreme Court."

He also called upon the leadership of the MILF to work with the government to save the peace process from finally collapsing.

The statement quoted Ihsanoglu as saying he would "mobilize resources from OIC affiliated institutions ... to alleviate the suffering of the displaced populaces."

On Monday, Malacañang said it was prepared to return to the negotiating table with the MILF "as soon as positive results are gathered from the ongoing consultations with stakeholders and affected communities in Mindanao."

Press Secretary Jesse Robredo said this was what President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo told

CIVIC-minded people jumped into a bus van to travel for 18 days to Mindanao in a quest for peace that started in Baguio City. Some offered prayers before the journey.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during their meeting Saturday in Lima, Peru where they attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' Summit.

Dumuo said the President explained to Rice the new task of her administration in pursuing peace talks with the Muslim rebels, which is based on more authentic consultations, and not dictated by any armed group.

"There might be a new announcement very soon about the resumption of peace talks with the MILF," said Dumuo.

Displaced folk appeal for peace talks to resume

DAVAO CITY—PEOPLE DISPLACED BY THE renewed fighting in Mindanao are calling on both the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to return to the negotiating table even as the Mindanao week of peace opens here with hundreds of evacuees in Pikit and Lanao del Norte still in evacuation sites.

"We're not asking for relief goods, we're not even asking for food," said Pastor Ben Montecalla, council member of the Mindanao People's Caucus. "We're asking simply for the war to stop so that people displaced by the war can go back to their lives."

He made the statement amid reports that the supply of food and medicine is running out in evacuation sites and that thousands of those displaced by the August fighting have not yet returned home.

Former President Estrada declared the last week of November as the Mindanao Week of Peace in 1997, three years before he declared an all-out war in Mindanao that swelled the number of internally displaced people in the island.

August failure

In August, the failure of the signing of the memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MOA-AD) between the government and the MILF led to the breakdown of talks that triggered the renewed fighting that month.

"Now we're asking the President (Arroyo) to resume the peace talks, stop the war to allow the civilians to go home," Montecalla said.

Bishop Kiarel Mitigenes, president of the women's group Umpugan Pulon sa Rotonon (Unified Rotonon) in Pikit town's barangay Takepan, said food is running out, people are suffering from cancers and a lot of children are getting sick in evacuation sites.

"No one will benefit from this war," said Mitigenes, 61. She said that villagers fled Takepan when they found themselves in the crossfire on Aug. 10 in clashes between the Moro rebels and soldiers 100 meters away from their house.

"We went to the school ground, which was in the line of fire when the fighting broke out," she said.

Mitigenes said only half of the 30 families who fled the village decided to go home. "Most of the children, the women and the elderly decided to stay in the evacuation centers for fear that fighting might erupt again."

> 'We're asking simply for the war to stop ...'

The renewed fighting displaced an estimated 500,000 people, to what international and organization described as one of the worst humanitarian crisis in Mindanao.

The controversial MOA-AD would have given the MILF authority over areas covered by the proposed Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) once the peace pact with the rebel group is signed.

Bishop Antonio Ledesma, secretary general of the Mindanao People's Caucus, said the MOA-AD would have been a step toward the peaceful resolution of the Mindanao conflict if it had not become a "casualty" of politics.

"It could have been an opening to the peaceful solution of the conflict," she said. "It just happened that some political interests are in it, that the real issue has been muddled."

1976 repeated

Since the MOA-AD required changes in the Constitution to take effect, the opposition looked at it as a ploy to extend the term of Ms Arroyo.

"The opposition to the MOA-AD is not on the document itself," Arzaga said. "It just became a casualty of the political wrestling in Manila."

"As a peace advocate, I dream for this long running conflict to end," said Montecillo.

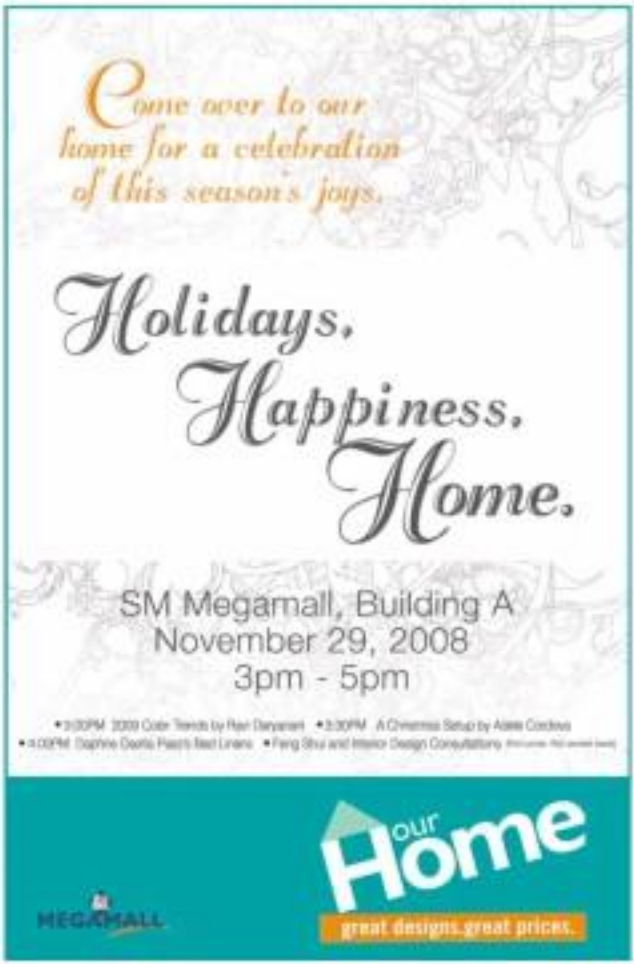
"That outcome, we can solve this in our lifetime, instead of passing it on to the next generation," he added.

He recalled growing up in Lanao del Norte when one lived out in the early 1970s.

"In 1968, I was 8 years old," he said, referring to the March 1968 massacre of a group of Moro youths in Jabidah off the coast of Corregidor by soldiers of former President Marcos.

"I was 11 when the Tacub massacre (that killed 65 people) happened. I've already evacuated three times in my lifetime but this year, my grandson evacuated just as far as Iligan (Lanao)," Montecillo said.

(Inquirer Lizon, Inquirer Mindanao)



Peace caravan stops by Negros

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—A nationwide caravan for peace in Mindanao stopped by here to generate support for relief for people in Mindanao displaced by the ongoing conflict.

The Duyog Mindanao People's Caravan for Peace and Solidarity with almost 50 participants, passed through this city yesterday.

The participants held a caravan in the Negros Occidental provincial capitol in Bacolod City, followed by a public forum and discussion with displaced persons from Pikit, Cotabato and Datu Piang, Maguindanao.

"The warm welcome and participation of the Negros in the peoples' caravan is actually a message to our brothers and sisters in Mindanao that Negros and Moros are friends," said Gus Miclat, executive director of the Initiatives for International Dialogue, the group spearheading the Duyog along with other Mindanao-based, national and international peace networks.

Duyog Mindanao organizers said the conflict between government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front has displaced more than 500,000 people.

Some of them lived in deplorable conditions in cramped evacuation centers while others sought refuge with relatives and friends in safer communities, the organizers said.

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jon Bandayrel
News Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Adivay: Preserving culture of Benguet

By Dolmar Cantre
La Trinidad, Benguet

THE GODS, THE UNSEEN AND BENGUET'S FOREFATHERS WOULD have loved to join the celebration. Indeed, the Adivay, the province's annual cultural festival, lived up to its call of sharing and celebrating as hundreds of tinuwa from Benguet turned the sports center in Barangay Wangal in La Trinidad town into a field of culture and tradition.

In the young and old, it was a feast.

There were the "pasen" (gong) and the "soldao" (native drum) being beat and played. Men and women performed the "sayaw" (dance). Many, who came in their native attire, joined the chanting.

On Saturday and Sunday, Benguet residents and officials, who gathered for the Adivay, feasted on 26 pigs, two cows and a carabao.

Legends of pigs were heard from each of the huge tents assigned to the province's 13 towns—Mt.-Ab, Bokod, Buguias, Kabayan, Kapangan, Kibungan, Itogon, La Trinidad, Mankayan, Sablan, Tuba and Tublay.

For Benguet people, the feast is "the pigs' appeal, the better. Those who heard it cannot deny every (invitation) to the feast.

The Adivay, which also marked the province's 109th foundation day, saw anew the leadership of the "manbunong" (native priest) who led the traditional prayers and offerings.

By tradition, the sword of the "manbunong" would not be removed. Not even elected officials could go against their word.

Tie that binds

"We always pray for the success of our leaders and the development of our province," said Santiago Berking, 84, a "manbunong" who led the prayers. "We ask those who stood ahead of us to bless us and be with us always."

Another "manbunong," Ago Magayon, 87, said, "We do not pray only to one god. There are a lot of them, depending on the occasion. Foremost is to seek for the (good) health of our leaders and bounty for our farms."

Berking and Magayon said the Adivay was found to succeed since their sending of the sacrificial pig's life revealed nothing wrong.

Elders and local officials agreed that the Adivay proved that culture is the province's identity and the tie that binds its diverse tribes of Kankanaey, Ibaloi, Ikalahan and Kalinga-ys, among others.

"It is a way of remembering our roots and [educating to] the younger generation that our forefathers gave us a legacy to cure for," Benguet Gov. Nestor Pongyan said.

Benguet, he said, is at the crossroads of globalization, which threatens not only its culture but also its industries.

"Here, culture becomes a source of strength to fight adversities. The young must learn it," he said.

Ibaloi elder Antonio Amguiguey, 86, said the province's culture is more than a festival. It is a way of life that must be respected and preserved.

He said a gap exists between the old, who still dance the "tayom," and the young, who prefer hip-hop and R and B music.

It remains to be seen if local legislation could stop the skid in the interest for culture

"SAPLEY" (matter wine) consumed in clayware jars await tasting from elders to determine which ones has the best concoction. — DOLMAR CANTRE

Amguiguey, also president of the Ibaloi Indigenous Peoples Organization, shares what (now) eldest first—loss of cultural identity.

Dilemma

Dominga Baldino, a commissioner of the National Commission For Culture and the Arts (NCCA), said the province's dilemma is the same with the rest of the Cordillera where media and modern technology had eroded the youth's passion for indigenous practices.

"The trend is rushed by a shift from tradition to theoretical presentations of native dances and practices with contemporary music—capitalizing on the youth's desire to be fast and bring in," he said.

Board Member Ann Ramirez Jr. is worried that the province may have a stark reality. "The battle is between competent and mediocre players and the 'hipon' and 'wilfino,' he said.

Indigenous customs

However, the provincial board's education committee chair, and Bontoc-Ibaloy Mandayan chair of the indigenous peoples committee, have called on their colleagues to approve an ordinance requiring the Department of Education in the province to teach indigenous customs to all public elementary and high school students.

The officials want no less than a curriculum on indigenous practices, musical instruments and dances.

Ibaloi officials said that while there are no separate subjects for indigenous practices, the department has encouraged the "indigenization" of the curriculum by incorporating tribal practices in their lessons and students' extra-curricular activities.

Indigenous practices, they said, are taught in Shalin, Edukasyon at Pamplakuman (SHEP) music, education and sports) subjects.

It remains to be seen if local legislation could stop the skid in the interest for culture, but as long as there is the Adivay, the challenge of preserving Benguet's culture remains.

Subic shabu case far from over, says PDEA

CAMP TECSON, SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—The case involving the smuggling of P4-billion worth of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) into the Subic Bay Freeport in May is far from closed, the chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) said here on Tuesday.

Retired Gen. Dionisio Santiago said the case has yet to see closure as the main suspect, Filipino-Chinese Anthony "Tatay" Ang, continued to elude arrest six months after he failed to claim the container he passed off as computer parts.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority police and the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group discovered the load in four batches totaling more than 500 kg. The biggest load was found at the Anglo-Asia warehouse that Ang rented at the Freeport.

"We haven't gotten Anthony Ang. How can you close the case when you have not arrested the main suspect? There's no case closed. We only discovered the operations. This may take years and the criminal case may take long," Santiago said.

He also called on Iloilo reports that drug had been killed in a house him. "He's still alive. He's in China," Santiago said, citing intelligence reports.

Ang, he said, escaped because the order to hold his departure came late.

"He will be mistaken if he thinks the PDEA has exited the case. We don't easily stop. This is a continuing effort. If he can stay forever in China, well and good," Santiago said.

On the order of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the PDEA banned the shabu in June in a facility in Cavite.

Ang smirked the efforts of Santiago to seek protection from the PDEA. Sheyrie Ocejo, Inquirer Central Luzon

BRIDGE TO A CHURCH
An unfinished bridge in Lobo, Batangas is right next to old (but lit in the town. Some people in the area can't say why it was built to run much into the church. Others say it's a perfect example of insane corruption.

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Tax exemptions start reducing collection of BIR

By Joy A. Sabiers
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE REGIONAL OFFICE of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in Eastern Visayas reported a decrease in the collection of withholding taxes on compensation due to the implementation of the law giving tax exemptions to ordinary wage earners.

Araceli Cesario, chief of the collection division, said that for the month of October this year, collection of withholding taxes on compensation decreased by P31.865 million, down by 16 percent compared to the same month last year.

The decline in withholding tax collection started in July, when the BIR collected only P161 million from July to October, down from P191 million last month.

Cesario said all the six revenue district offices of the regional IRB registered lower collection on withholding tax compensation.

The biggest decline was noted in the Borongan district office, with its withholding tax collection reaching only P8 million from July to October 2008, a 58 percent drop from the P17.9 million collected during the same period last year.

The IRB Manila City district office collected P6 million for the same period, posting the lowest decrease of only 1.5 percent from its previous collection of P7.3 million.

Republic Act 9504 took effect last July providing an increase in tax exemptions and deductions for individual taxpayers.

The collection of withholding tax compensation represents about 40 percent of the bureau's sources of revenue.

With a projected decrease of collections on taxes, the regional IRB has intensified tax collection among businessmen, local government units and ordinary taxpayers who are delinquent in paying their taxes to the government, Cesario said.

"With this campaign, we hope to offset any losses that we have incurred," she said.

Cesario also said that for the past 10 months, the regional IRB was able to collect P2.3 billion in taxes, which is relatively higher compared to collection last year.

From January to October 2007, the regional IRB's collection reached more than P2 billion.

For the current year, the regional IRB has set a collection target of P3.3 billion.

Gov 'sad' he got flunked by bishop

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—GOV. AMADO Espino Jr. said he was "sad, disappointed [and] disgusted" after Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz gave him a failing grade for not stopping the illegal cockfight game jueteng and for distributing shotguns to village chiefs in Pangasinan.

"I'm just sad because I was being graded here when I'm doing my job very seriously and I'm being considered here like a kindergarten student, being graded by a kindergarten teacher," Espino said in a news conference on Monday at the Capitol Social Hall here.

He said that provincial governors in a "very serious" job and he was disappointed that Cruz had attacked his position as governor.

Cruz was given in a media forum on Thursday in Dagupan City where he was asked to rate almost his views on the presidency, the fertilizer scam, reproductive health care, early marriage and other issues.

Cruz had apologized to Espino in a local TV interview on Monday, saying he was sorry if he had offended the governor.

Provincial administrator Rafael Baraan said that it was unfair for Cruz to rate the performance of Espino solely on the basis of jueteng. Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Lawmaker wants JDV expelled from House

By Lala B. Salaverria

AFTER HIS OUSTER EARLIER this year as Speaker of the House of Representatives and head of Lakas for going against President Macapagal-Arroyo, Rep. Jose de Venecia is facing the prospect of losing his seat in Congress.

Agusan Del Norte Rep. Rodolfo Sousa, presenting De Venecia's statement on Monday during his testimony in the impeachment case against Mrs Arroyo that year.

Members of the minority said Amante's motion to oust De Venecia should be referred to the House ethics committee so that the Bungsuranon representative could be given a chance to cut his side.

Amante told reporters he asked for De Venecia's expulsion because he could not accept his claim that Filipinos are for sale.

"If you say this House is for sale, I want you to let many or that you are included so you would not be tainted with the corruption you charged the members of the House with, including the Filipino people," Amante said.

He added that the statements of De Venecia were an insult to God and country with all four.

Amante said De Venecia should present to the ethics committee the money he's remaining P500,000 that was illegally given to him by Malacañang to support the purportedly sham impeachment complaint against the President.

Tangle for comment, De Venecia said this latest development was part of Malacañang's move to get back at him.

"I was telling friends GMA and Malacañang will chase the Tall book to me and are their bill [because] they have [become] enemies of the state, ... this is part of that," De Venecia said in a phone interview.

He also pointed out that he and his son and namesake, who is one of those who filed the impeachment, have been receiving death threats.

"We are laying our lives on the line," he said.

RP faces tough choice for its New 7 Wonders of Nature entry

PLEASE VOTE From the depths of Tubbataha, volunteer divers send a message in resin one of the world's top 10 diving sites to the New 7 Wonders of the Waters. To vote, log on to www.new7wonders.com. At right, the Subterranean River National Park in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, is the other candidate for the New 7 Wonders of the world. It's reputed to be the world's longest underground river, extending up to 8.2 km.

A country must submit just one nominee.

Palawan's underground river remained at the top list only of the list of Philippine nominees (not take of the overall global roster of at least 400 nominees as of Nov. 24, according to the organizer, the New7Wonders Foundation).

With Tubbataha Reef ranked No. 1, the Philippines has the biggest number of nominees in the Top 10. Chocolate Hills in Bohol is at No. 5 and Mayon Volcano in Albay at No. 10.

Mt. Pinatubo in Zambales placed 175th; the Bonsdeed Igorots in Banaue, Ifugao, and Tasaf Subanons in Bataraan, Davao.

Deadline: Dec. 31

"This ranking can change as anything is possible in voting," the N7W Foundation said.

The top-ranked national treasure on Dec. 31 will represent the Philippines in the next phase of the New7Wonders of Nature campaign," it added.

"Should Puerto Princesa be the natural monument of which the people are the most proud, which should embody the beauty of the country?" the foundation said.

"The people of the Philippines must choose their favorite now."

Giving the Philippines a tough competition is neighbor Vietnam, which had three nominees in the Top 10—Ha Long Bay (2nd), Phu Mon Ke Bang National Park (7th) and Pandjan Mountain (10th).

Other nominees in the Top 10 are Cox's Bazar Beach in Bangladesh (2nd); the Ganges River Delta and Sundarbans Forest (8th), which are both shared by India and Bangladesh.

Preservation of nat'l treasures

Natural wonders shared by more than one country, like the Ganges and Sundarbans, are exempt from the so-called regional qualification requirement and will automatically continue into the next stage of the popularity competition.

For her part, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano, who chaired the N7W search as a big opportunity to pump up the volume of visitor arrivals, urged more Filipinos to cast their votes and urged the tourist hotspots to help finance efforts which are not exempted.

"Having several nominees from the country gives us a strong hope to be included in the international exhibition round," she said.

The N7W campaign, done mainly through www.new7wonders.com, is aimed at raising awareness and generating more tourism income to help nature reserves to be better preserved for future generations.

N7W Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Switzerland, is the same group that conducted an online search for the New 7 Wonders of the World last year.

From the current nominations round, the search will move on to the national qualification stage next year that would result in a shorter list of qualified nominees. The list will be finalized down to 21 finalists.

The "Official New 7 Wonders of Nature" will be announced in 2011.

Agri regional directors give lie to Bolante claim on fund use

Bolante and the congressional representatives that would receive the funds from the local governments.

Speaking at the resumption of the Senate inquiry into the fertilizer fund scam, Gabriel Veloria Emmick Lee Gazmin described the project as "extraordinary" and unlike others implemented by the DA. Dalanon had described it as a "regular" project.

"Considering the humongous amount involved, this [was] the first time we have seen a presidential kind of project in the region," Gazmin said in response to questions from Sen. Francis Escudero.

Gazmin also said Bolante's program, which had at its objective the distribution of fertilizers to farmers, had "more compelling design" and no guidelines.

Bolante is believed to have orchestrated the diversion of the P728-million fertilizer fund to supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo during the campaign for the 2004 presidential election.

Contempt

The senators appeared to have come better prepared to the inquiry being conducted by the blue ribbon committee now chaired by Sen. Richard Gordon.

And as in the first hearing two weeks ago, they repeatedly told Bolante to his face that he was being evasive and lying to them.

Sen. Pimentel Lacson moved at one point to cite the witness for contempt for "not telling the truth."

Gordon, however, said nine of the 17 committee members had signed Lacson's resolution—the majority required to be able to cite Bolante for contempt and have him detained in the Senate premises.

But Gordon himself has yet to sign the resolution, saying he had yet to confer with the other committee members.

Gordon also said he would push for its deliberation until Friday because Bolante was scheduled to attend a hearing at the Court of Appeals on his camp's petition for habeas corpus.

"This is out of respect for the rule of law," Gordon told reporters.

But in a course with senators at the session, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile "cautioned" the blue ribbon committee members to rush for the sanctions of only either DA regional directors before citing Bolante for contempt.

Enrile said this was his "suggestion" that the committee members had the "prerogative" to heed or ignore.

Lacson, however, said yesterday's hearing only showed that Bolante had been fooling both the senators and the congressmen.

He said he had moved for the Senate to cite the witness for contempt "in Bolante would be forced to tell the truth."

"Bolante's blatant lie was that he was not involved in the implementation of the project ... And what's clear-cut was that he was really hands-on in the implementation of the project, down to the choice of the NGO that would pass through him," Lacson said.

2 documents

In the hearing, Escudero was able to get Davao Director Roger Chio to say that Bolante had a hand in choosing the fertilizer to be purchased by the DA regional offices.

Chio submitted to Escudero two documents.

One was a DA memorandum order authorizing all regional directors to approve funds for the purchase of fertilizer up to P1 million. (For purchases above that amount, the General Office's approval was required.)

The other, dated March 3, 2004, and signed by Bolante "by the authority" of then Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Leong, was a request for the purchase of P5 million worth of fertilizer at a cost of P1,500 per bag.

Escudero said the document showed that Bolante had approved the purchase of the fertilizer as well as the quantity to be bought.

"Whether it went through the process or not, you approved it. You know about it and you cannot deny it," Escudero told Bolante after the latter answered that the choice of the supplier and the canvassing of the fertilizer prices were for the regional offices to decide.

'Very strong' with Palace

At one point in the hearing, Gordon said "this guy [Bolante] is very strong" with the Arroyo administration, to purportedly shown by the ease and speed with which he had the questioned fertilizer fund released.

Gordon also said that after Bolante retired as agriculture undersecretary, he received P200,000 in monthly allowances from the Department of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

"I didn't know they are getting salaries that huge [in the GSIS]. Maybe this should be investigated, too," the senator said in Filipino.

Bolante said it was his understanding that he might him to the GSIS post after heading the DA in August 2004.

But Sen. Ruggero Recto pointed out that according to the GSIS charter, the President was the appointing authority of the Board of Trustees, and, that there was 10% a person who had appointed Bolante to the GSIS.

Enrile asked Bolante how he could be ignorant of the law that created the agency he served as a board member.

Gordon also asked Bantu Trinidad Pelaquil, GSIS vice president for physical resources, who was Bolante's chief of staff when the latter was agriculture undersecretary, how much his salary was.

Pelaquil's response: P76,000 a month.

Bolante and Pelaquil were in "a unique situation," Gordon said, adding:

Primed for the kill

"This happened during the [2004] election, and after the election, they retired and ended up in GSIS. One received P200,000 while the other one got P95,000. So there seems to be a reward.

"That is what you call a golden parachute."

But in Malacañang, one meeting to back on Bolante?

Gordon noted this question after discovering that Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap had ordered the services of three lawyers to assist the DA regional directors summoned to yesterday's hearing.

"Mysteriously we lie at Bolante (to be being primed for the kill)?" Gordon asked after the four-hour hearing.

The lawyers claimed to be providing free legal assistance to the officials upon Yap's directive. Their presence was discovered after one of them, who introduced himself as Gabriel Esquivel, slipped a piece of paper to Western Mindoro regional director Rolando Oblena while he was being grilled by Gordon, Escudero.

An initially hesitant Oblena eventually said Bolante had instructed him by phone to replace the name of Kalibo as the fund beneficiary with the NGO Sentrad Organization for Agricultural Enhancement and Productivity Inc.

The two other lawyers were discovered in the gallery, sitting behind the regional directors.

"Who pays for your services?" asked Gregory Gordon asked the lawyers.

One of them replied that they were not being paid but had been asked by Yap to assist the regional directors.

Gordon said it was important to read what was written on the paper slipped to him.

"Tell the truth," Oblena read.

Said Gordon: "That's amazing."

'Damaging'

Asked by the senators who had instructed him to change the recipients of the fertilizer funds, Oblena said: "It was more other than our (undersecretary)."

He said Bolante received him through the land line in his office on July 27, 2004.

He added that even after he and the government of Kalibo had signed a memorandum of agreement for the fund distribution days before the May 2004 elections, he changed the agreement on July 29 to favor the private group in the new project proposals.

Gordon said that if proven true, Oblena's claim would be "very damaging" to Bolante. He said it would show that Bolante had a hand in the distribution of the funds, including choosing who would receive them.

But Bolante said, "I never talked to him (Oblena) over the phone and I never gave him any instruction to favor any NGO."

To Bolante aides who were lying, Gordon said he would call for the records of the phone calls that Oblena's office had received during the period in question.

Runner

Gordon also ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to locate Marilena Aytona, said to be Bolante's runner to the food stores.

The senator issued the order after the Senate sergeant-at-arms failed to serve Aytona the summons to appear as yesterday's hearing.

Aytona was earlier identified as the one who had proposed the 20-30-40 sharing scheme for a 9% million fertilizer allocation—30 percent for the congressman, 20 percent for Bolante, and 40 percent for the purchase of liquid fertilizer.

He's grilled on 14 foreign trips, 23 bank accounts

fertilizer fund scam that he lost it upon his election as head from the United States last month.

Estrada was armed with documents when he confronted Bolante about the travels that the latter made in Asia, Europe and the United States from February 2004 to October 2005.

The former agriculture undersecretary was also made to trace the 14 trips in the United States, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong during that period. He traveled to "Bangkok proceeding to Switzerland" on Dec. 7, 2004, and to Europe on April 6, 2005.

The witness said that while he left the Department of Agriculture on Aug. 1, 2004, his trips to the United States had to do with his job at the department.

He said he made the other trips as a "private individual" and not as an official of Asian International. The trip to Switzerland was made in the latter capacity, he said.

Can't remember

Asked by Estrada if he was confirming the trips, Bolante said he could not remember all of them.

It was at this point that Estrada told the blue ribbon chair, Sen. Richard Gordon, of his request to subpoena Bolante's passport, "to check and confirm the flights."

"I lost my passport," Bolante then told the committee, eliciting jeers from the gallery.

The witness said it was his son who lost his old and new passports that were stashed together when he arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport upon deportation from the United States on Oct. 28.

He said his son had even lost his cell phone on that chaotic night covered by scores of reporters and photographers.

Promptly, Estrada could only say that he "expected that answer" from the witness.

Why Switzerland?

Speaking with reporters later, Estrada said he had asked about the trips particularly because he was curious about Bolante's trip to Switzerland.

"Why did he go to Switzerland? Did he go there before he shared his bank accounts or after?" Estrada said. "I think he might be depositing some funds in Switzerland. I am just suspecting. Because why so many times in Hong Kong and in the United States?"

Estrada also asked about Bolante's 23 bank accounts during yesterday's hearing.

Bolante said he was maintaining only four bank accounts as the others had already been closed.

He stated as basis for one of the accounts he had at Metrobank Bank which were closed after Bank of Philippine Islands "absorbed" it.

But Estrada told reporters that he did not believe Bolante's claim of only four bank accounts.

"That's why I wanted to invite officials of the Anti-Money Laundering Commission to find out how many bank accounts he has," Estrada said.

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Editor Peter G. Dipasupil

Businesswoman dies in ambush

Victim killed on eve of departure for US to escape death threats

By Nancy C. Carvajal

ON THE EVE OF HER DEPARture for the United States to escape from people who had been reportedly threatening her life, a businesswoman was gunned down inside her car on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City Monday night.

Marivelle Bilaos, 40, sustained gunshot wounds in the head and hands and was declared dead on arrival at the Mel-via General Hospital.

Leyzer Gendrao, 27, a friend of the victim who was with her at the time of the shooting, remained under observation at the hospital after she was shot in the shoulder.

Supt. Marvelous Policarpio, homicide section chief of the Quezon City Police District, said Bilaos was supposed to leave for the United States yesterday.

"We're not sure if the trip was pushed through for a vacation or if she was trying to evade a supposed death threat," Policarpio said.

He added that Gendrao had told investigators that the victim—who owned and managed a construction firm—had received death threats before she was killed.

Policarpio said that based on Gendrao's statements, the attack could have been arranged by a disgruntled business rival.

"We are looking into a business dispute [as the motive] behind the ambush," he told the reporters, adding that they have yet to get the statements of the victim's family.

Policarpio said that Bilaos and Gendrao were on board a Mitsubishi Adventure at around 7 p.m. Monday en route to Batasan when the shooting occurred.

Witnesses told the police that as the victim's car, with Bilaos behind the wheel, approached the pedestrian overpass on Commonwealth Avenue, a "engine-type" vehicle drew alongside the victim's left side.

Gendrao told the police that the victim suddenly slumped in her seat. She added that she did not realize that she and her friend had been shot at because she did not hear any gunshot.

"The shooter could have used a silencer, because no one heard a shot fired," Policarpio said.

Estafa raps filed vs sportsman

By Tina G. Santos

SPORTSMAN GO TORI BOB, HEAD OF THE Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (Patafa), was charged with estafa on Monday for allegedly defrauding a businessman of P247 million.

The charge against Go, which was filed at the Manila Regional Trial Court, was based on the complaint of Ernesto Ilokano.

Court records showed that on May 22, 2007, Go contracted Ilokano to lend him P217 million for "the implementation of a Patafa project. Go reportedly told the complainant that the money would be paid by the sports association.

When Ilokano agreed, Go gave him a postdated Patafa check for P22.7 million dated Aug. 27, 2007 as payment. Ilokano, however, said that when he tried to cash the check the following month, he found out that no such fund had been deposited.

He went to Patafa where he found out that there was no Patafa project as Go had claimed and that the group had not authorized Go to borrow money from him.

Assistant City Prosecutor Vivon Andres, meanwhile, recommended a bail of P40,000 for Go's temporary liberty.

DID YOU KNOW

IN THE 1950s, the Philippine government implemented housing projects outside Manila to decongest the city. The housing units were zoned mainly for government employees, and are identified by their project numbers to this day, like Project 8 and Project 8 in Quezon City.

CityVL, Zenaida Inquiro-Punzalan

Worker killed in series of unfortunate events

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A MAINTENANCE WORKER at the Manila Ocean Park died on the spot on Monday afternoon when he fell off a 12-foot makeshift ladder while installing a closed circuit television camera.

As he fell, he also impaled himself upon a pointed piece of metal rod that hit his head on the ground.

Reports from the Manila Police District homicide section identified the victim as Edmundo Cabero, 28, a resident of Road 1, North Orange Mall, Tagaig City.

The incident happened at 3:25 p.m. Monday on the ground floor of the outdoor recreation center in Bonifacio Drive, Manila.

The police report said Cabero and his brother, Ruben, were atop the improvised ladder and installing a security camera when the victim lost his balance and fell.

Homicide investigators, however, said they have not ruled out foul play in the victim's death and were continuing their investigation into the case.

Taxi group asks gov't not to scrap ₱10 tip

By Nico T. Crisostomo

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL TAXI OPERATORS Association (PNTOA) has asked the government to "exercise fairness" in deciding whether or not to scrap the mandatory P10 tip for taxi drivers.

"We are not against any rollback per se if fuel prices continue to go down. We are simply asking government not to do it at the first sign of stability in pump prices because it takes so long for us to enjoy relief times [old prices] ourselves," PNTOA president Rony Secreto said in a phone interview.

PNTOA is the largest group of taxi drivers and operators nationwide.

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board will hold a public hearing on Dec. 3 to discuss the possibility of implementing a rollback in taxi fare following a decrease in fuel prices. Another round of possible cuts in jeep and bus fares will also be taken up during the hearing.

In July, the LTFRB allowed taxi drivers to charge an additional P10 on top of the metered fare.

"The add-on has been implemented for [several] months now but gasoline and LPG prices just started to decline last month. We hope the government monitors fuel prices for a few more months to see if it has really stabilized," Secreto said.

Early this month, the minimum fare for jeepney riders was slashed to P6 from P6.50. For buses plying the provinces, there was a 50 centavos rollback for ordinary buses and P1 for air-conditioned buses.

In Metro Manila, ordinary and air-conditioned buses knocked P1 off their minimum fare.

The LTFRB said fuel rollbacks in diesel prices have totalled P17.50 per liter since July. On the other hand, gas prices have gone down by P16.50 per liter because of falling prices in the world market.

SHOW OF ARMS
Members of the Manila Police District display their firearms during yesterday's inspection held in front of the MPD headquarters on UN Avenue, Manila.

QC councilor seeks ban on 'tasteless' billboards

By Julie M. Aurelio

A QUEZON CITY COUNCILOR HAS SOUGHT A ban on the installation of huge billboards in the city, especially on major thoroughfares where the structures could put at risk the safety of motorists in times of bad weather.

The resolution authored by Councilor Winston Castelo proposed no new billboards and motorists alike have complained about the proliferation of outdoor advertisements.

"There is an urgent need for a moratorium or ban on the construction of tasteless and badly placed billboards," Castelo said in resolution number 08-452.

Should the measure be passed by the city council, the ban would cover billboards installed on Quezon City's major and secondary thoroughfares, avenues and streets.

The proposal came a month after three billboards on Roxas, Quezon City, collapsed one after the other in a matter of a heavy downpour on Dec. 13.

Five people were hurt when one of the structures fell on the roof of a bus station in Sutukan, causing heavy traffic on the southbound lanes of Roxas.

The accidents renewed calls for a ban on billboards installed along major thoroughfares.

In September 2006, a man was killed when a huge outdoor ad fell on the van he was driving in Guadalupe in Makati City, prompting the government to probe the structural safety of billboards.

The Department of Public Works and Highways later took down several billboards after these were discovered to be structurally unsound and in violation of the National Building Code.

METROBRIEFS

PNP opens K9 training center

TO MARK the anniversary campaign in Metro Manila, the Philippine National Police yesterday inaugurated a P2.6 million training center for bomb-sniffing dogs in Taguig City. US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa led the unveiling of the facility for the K9 Unit of NCRPO's Explosive and Ordnance Division (EOD) was financed by a P14.2 million grant from the US government as part of its antiterrorism assistance program. The building, he added, was facilitated through a memorandum of agreement between the US State Department and NCRPO in 1997. Bimb-hirin Nadera-Bing, the training center, Rabuat said the US government also gave six Labradors to the EOD. "With the construction of the EOD-K9 center ... we would push further our activities against terrorism," Talaud said. Kenney, meanwhile, said the center would be a "valuable and important tool" in help bomb experts deal with security threats and enhance their capability to deter terrorist attacks. Verzosa said the specially trained canines would not only help them protect the metropolis from bombings, but would also be helpful in their intensified campaign against illegal drugs.

Marlon Ramos

3 men killed, stuffed into sacks

HOMICIDE investigators of the Manila Police District were still looking for clues after the bodies of three men who had been beaten and strangled to death were found stuffed into sacks in Tondo, Manila, at dawn yesterday. PO3 Romnaldo Rosario, case investigator, said that some of the three bodies bore tattoos, another possible victims of summary executions. One of the men were earlier T-shirt with "Ex-gilead" (crucified) written on the back. He was described as between 40 and 45 years old, 5'5" tall and of medium build. Del Rosario said the second victim was between 24 and 28 years old, 5'5" tall and also of medium build. He was clad in a white polo shirt with the words "Victory Gold" written on the breast pocket and "Sapporo Beer" on the back. The third was between 40 and 44 years old, 5'5" tall and of slim build. He was half-naked and had bare feet. All the victims bore bruises, mostly on their faces, and had strangulation marks around their necks. Their bodies were stuffed into sacks which were dumped on a garbage pile on Road 10, near the corner of Lakandula Street in Tondo. The victims were found by a passenger of a jeepney passing by.

Jaime Ryan V. Andrade

EPD cops put best foot forward

DRESSED at the Eastern Police District headquarters were on their best behavior yesterday as an inspection team from Camp Crame began its annual assessment of their capabilities and preparedness in responding to crimes. The inspection is comprehensive, from checking if uniforms are properly tucked or shoes adequately shined to making the officers on hand to conduct a proper arrest or to administer first aid. The exams included EPD director, Chief Supt. Linn Calingasan, said the Annual General Inspection being conducted by the National Capital Region Police Office ensures that police service [illegible] Dec. 2. The yearly assessments are conducted nationwide. By the end of the Operational Readiness Security Inspection Test and Evaluation, Calingasan said he would have a good idea of how well or badly the police stations of Pasig, Marikina, San Juan and Mandaluyong cities fared. "The inspection is not only physical. It will also test their skills in communication skills and investigation. Written exams will be conducted on different subjects. There will also be practical exercises," he said. The practical aspect of the exam involves each authorities on how to arrest a suspect properly, administer first aid and defend the camp, as well as in hand special skills like sniping, the official said. "Of course, operations will be inspected on the recent performers," Calingasan said. Penalties range from relieving the commander from duty to requiring officers to do additional training, he added.

Ellalyn De Vera

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Obama: Millions more may lose their jobs

INDUSTRIAL waste has turned this portion of the Yellow River into red. Many rivers and lakes in China have been rendered toxic after decades of breakneck economic growth. AP

One-third of China's Yellow River polluted

BEIJING—A THIRD OF CHINA'S MOTHER Yellow River, which supplies water to millions of people in the country's north, is heavily polluted by industrial waste and unsafe for any use, according to new scientific data.

The Yellow River, the second-longest in China after the Yangtze, has seen its water quality deteriorate rapidly in the last few years, as discharge from factories increases and water levels drop because of diversion for booming cities.

The river supplies a region chronically short of water but rich in industry.

The Yellow River Conservancy Committee said 32.8 percent of the river's water sampled registered worse than level 5, meaning it's unfit for drinking, aquaculture, industrial use and even agriculture, according to criteria used by the UN Environmental Program.

A 2007 survey covered rivers than 13,000 kilometers of the river, which flows from western Qinghai province across China into the Bohai sea, and its tributaries. Only 16 percent of the river samples reached level 1 or 2,—water considered safe for household use.

Industry and manufacturing made up 79 percent of the discharge into the river, with 21 percent coming from households and 0.4 percent from other sources.

The results showed pollution had grown slightly worse since 2006, when 31 percent of the water in the river was poorer than a level 5, according to an earlier survey, although only 12,300 km was measured then.

"It's not surprising," said Wen Bo, of the Asia Pacific Caliber-based environmental group Pacific Environment.

Many polluting firms in the upper and middle reaches of Yellow River have not been well monitored by local governments or protected because they give jobs to workers, according to Wen, who is the organization's China program director.

There is also no mechanism for richer provinces downstream to help the poorer ones upstream clean up.

"They are just treating the river as a dumping site," Wen said. "It's basically a sewage channel for the province that drains the river."

China's State Council launched a nationwide campaign to reduce the discharge of pollutants from industrial companies in the second half of last year in an effort to start solving the problem, the official Xinhua News Agency said. AP

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK Obama on Monday warned that millions more Americans workers could lose their jobs next year as he played down expectations his administration could engineer a quick turnaround of the financial crisis.

Hoping to hit the ground running when he takes office Jan. 20, the new US president-elect urged the new Congress on Monday to pass quickly what was expected to be a massive economic stimulus package, pledged help for the troubled auto industry and blessed the Bush administration's moves to bail out the financial industry.

At the same time, Obama said he planned a second news conference in as many days on Tuesday to discuss the need "to come out federal budget, line-by-line, and make some painful cuts and sacrifices as well."

Obama named New York Federal Reserve President Tim Geithner the next treasury secretary at Monday's press conference, where he said the United States faced a "crisis of historic proportions" and played down expectations his administration could put the brakes on quickly.

"That will not be easy. There are no shortcuts or quick fixes to this crisis, which has been many years in the making, and the economy is likely to get worse before it gets better," he said.

"Full recovery will not happen immediately ... Most experts now believe that we could lose millions of jobs next year."

Obama ordered his team over the weekend to work on a program to create or save 2.5 million jobs by the end of 2010. He would not put a figure on how large a stimulus package he wants from Congress, saying only that it would be "sizable," but Democratic lawmakers speculated the price tag could reach $700 billion over two years.

At his news conference, Obama was critical of the country's top three automakers, saying he was surprised they did not have a precise plan for their future before asking Congress last week to approve $25 billion in emergency loans. But, he said he expected "to be able to shape a rescue."

Obama also named Lawrence Summers as director of his National Economic Council. Summers was treasury secretary under former President Bill Clinton and is a former president of Harvard University.

He also intends to name Peter Orszag to his budget director, turning to Congress' chief adviser on spending and taxes as he fills out his economic team. Orszag, 39, is serving a four-year term as head of the Congressional Budget Office.

Obama said the economic and financial crisis confronting the United States and the world demanded the "utmost judgment and fresh thinking" but new team would bring to bear on problems as great as any team the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Kicking off the Thanksgiving holiday week in the United States, Obama also announced nine other members of his new economic team. He named Christina Romer as chair of his Council of Economic Advisers, and Melody Barnes as director of his White House Domestic Policy Council.

Geithner is an Asian affairs veteran who has studied Japanese and Chinese and has lived throughout the region. He earned an Asian studies degree from Dartmouth College and international economics and East Asian studies degrees from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, according to the Federal Reserve website.

The scope of the recovery package Geithner plans would be far more ambitious than Obama had spelled out during his presidential campaign, when he proposed $175 billion so he could be in spending and tax-cutting stimulus. The new plan will be significantly larger and incorporate his campaign ideas for new jobs in environmentally friendly technologies. It also would include his proposals for tax relief for middle- and lower-income workers. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Still no ransom set for supertanker

MOGADISHU—Somali pirates holding a Saudi supertanker filled with Sirius, which was loaded with 2 million barrels of crude oil, say the ship owner has not contacted them and that they have not yet set a ransom. A pirate spokesperson said only intermediaries had contacted the group about the supertanker but that they were not satisfied. AP

Kim Jong-il visits factories

SEOUL—North Korea's Kim Jong-il paid visits to machinery and soap-making factories, state media reported on Tuesday, the latest in a series of dispatches in recent weeks about public appearances by a leader believed to be recovering from a stroke. AP

2 having sex on beach deported

DUBAI—An appeals court in Dubai on Tuesday suspended three-month jail terms against two Britons convicted of having sex on the beach in the booming Gulf emirate. Michelle Palmer, 37, and Vince Acors, 34, will now be deported from the country, their lawyer Hassan Milad said. AFP

Poorer by $212 billion

MUMBAI—These are painful times for India's tycoons. Ria Sen Asia Pivot Ltd said recently. A falling stock market, pseudo rupee plunge (Rupee, a London court heard on Monday). The amount of the wealth of India's 48 richest people, with their net worth plunging to $138 billion from $350 billion a year ago. Reuters

Bra for Japanese boys

TOKYO—Who said bras are only for women? A Japanese online lingerie retailer is getting bras for cross-dressing men and they've quickly become one of its most popular items. Since launching here weeks ago on Rakuten, a major Japanese web shopping mall, the Wishesroom shop has sold over 300 men's bras at 2,800 yen ($30) each. The shop also stocks men's panties as well as lingerie for women. Reuters

Boy George goes on trial

LONDON—Pop star Boy George handcuffed a male escort to the wall and held him with a metal chain as he tried to flee from a naked photo shoot, a London court heard on Monday. The singer and disc jockey—going trial under his real name George O'Dowd—charged as Aaron Carlson on April 28 last year. Beauticians Chris Choo Lee told at the start of his trial on assault and false imprisonment charges. AFP

Facebook wins case vs spammer

SAN JOSE, California—Facebook has won a $873 million judgment against a Canadian man who bombarded users with millions of unsolicited messages about drugs and sex. US District Judge Jeremy Fogel signed the default judgment on Friday, resolving a lawsuit that Facebook filed in August against Adam Guerbuez of Montreal and his business, Atlantis Blue Capital. AP

Germany faces Santa shortage

BERLIN—Rotund. Ghost-ful, chubby-cheeked, preferably with fluffy white beards and an ho-ho-ho voice. Ready to work hard for one month. Germany is running out of qualified Santa Clauses and needs to recruit and train them fast, a leading job agency says. Reuters

Russians cut back on vodka drinking

MOSCOW—The global financial crisis has proved so bad that Russians are cutting back on vodka. Stockpiles of Russia's national drink were 5% below those at the start of the month than the same time a year ago because factories are producing vodka faster than they can sell it, an alcohol industry lobby and research group said on Monday. Reuters

The WORLD

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MOVERS of the People's Alliance for Democracy lay siege to the government's temporary offices at Bangkok's old airport on Tuesday

Thai gov't hides from protesters

BANGKOK—THE THAI GOVERNMENT ON TUESDAY INSISTED IT was "fully functional" but refused to disclose where officials were working to avoid provoking more protests with antigovernment activists who have vowed to bring the administration to a standstill.

Spokesperson Nattawut Saikua indicated the Thai government had effectively gone into hiding to avoid thousands of protesters who surrounded the prime minister's temporary headquarters at Bangkok's domestic airport and reinforced on a vast and ancient chain to block their movements.

Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat was in Peru for a summit of Pacific Rim leaders and he was not expected back until Wednesday. Where he remains, however, he will continue the latest woes in Thailand's political system—and the need to find a more effective space.

Protesters seeking Somchai's resignation have occupied the Bangkok headquarters, known as Government House, since Aug. 26, forcing him to relocate to a makeshift office at the VIP area of the former international airport.

Thousands of protesters from the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) surrounded the government's makeshift office in Don Muang airport on Tuesday a day after blockading Parliament and forcing the postponement of an important parliamentary session.

Protest leaders said their goal was to block the government from meeting—wherever and whenever that may be.

"We'll protest until there is no Cabinet meeting," said a protest leader, General Boonsuk. "We'll intercept their every attempt to run the country for free."

The weekly Cabinet meeting is usually held on Tuesdays but was changed to Wednesday because of General Boonsuk's absence.

A few thousand protesters marched later Tuesday from the airport to the nearby Thai Army headquarters, where they believed a government meeting was taking place.

Kanawat said he would use coalitions where the government was meeting.

"The government is fully functional and continues to work as usual but we cannot disclose where the government is working right now because it will provoke PAD and might cause a lot of trouble," he said, speaking by telephone.

He added that the government "intends to negotiate with PAD to get the temporary government house back in a few days."

The protesters, seeking the resignation of what they allege is a corrupt government, occupied two sights of the Bangkok airports.

Stranded said more than 1,000 government employees evacuated the offices at Don Muang airport on Monday afternoon.

The airport's VIP terminal was about a kilometer from the main passenger terminal and protesters showed no immediate sign of trying to disrupt travel. AP

Court cites Journal in contempt

SINGAPORE—THE HIGH COURT ON Tuesday ruled that Wall Street Journal Asia in contempt of court for publishing boycott-Britain and a letter to the editor that the government claimed damaged the reputation of the country's judicial system.

The court also fined the newspaper HK$100,000 ($13,000).

Justice Tay Yong Kwang ruled against the newspaper and two of its editors, three weeks after Attorney General Walter Woon argued the editorials published in June and July questioned the judiciary's independence from Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the ruling People's Action Party (PAP).

Hot meting out punishment in this case would only increase the country's ratio of law, the court said.

The letter to the editor was written by Chee Soon Juan, head of the opposition Singapore Democratic Party.

"In my opinion, all three publications contained inaccuracies of fact, lack of impartiality and lack of independence and implied that the judiciary is subservient to Mr Lee and/or the PAP and is a tool for obtaining political threats," Tay wrote in the ruling.

"The three publications are in contempt of court because the allegations by way of insinuations clearly possess the inherent tendency or interfere with the administration of justice."

The newspaper's lawyer, Philip Jeyaretnam, was not immediately available for comment. The Wall Street Journal is published by Dow Jones & Co., a unit of News Corp. AP

Matisse painting finds new home

PARIS—FINALLY, JUSTICE FOR HENRI Matisse's "Le Mur Rose."

The oil painting, which was stolen from a rich German Jewish family sometime after 1937 and kept by a Nazi official responsible for delivering prizes got to hundreds, is to be given Thursday to a British charity that supports medical research in Israel.

The story of how "Le Mur Rose," or "The Pink Wall," made its way through the war to France is as captivating as the colorful painting itself. The short is accepted with death, torture and injustice.

Helen Dunn Jones, presently from the report sale of the painting will go toward the Magen David Adom network of ambulances, paramedics and emergency communications in Israel.

"It's a remarkable end in some ways slightly creepy story" said Simon Glyn, chair of the British charity Magen David Adom UK. He will take delivery of the artwork at

"LE MUR ROSE" by Henri Matisse

the French culture ministry in Paris.

The painting belonged to Henry Feld, a German Jew who made his fortune in the glamour, founding the SI, Feld & Co. Telefon und Telegraphenwerke AG in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1909. AP

Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa • Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Harbour five clobbers Bacchus

By Jasmine W. Paya

A MORE COMPLETE HARBOUR CENTRE SHOWED up to possess first-class, 80-60, at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City yesterday and sustain its perfect run in the PBL PG-Wise Lineman Cup.

Five-timerbefore and Boni Ilarcena combined for 30 points to power the Batang Pier to their fifth straight victory.

"We played a lot better, the compressure of the team was there, especially in the first half," said Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent.

Sachin Magnaka Pure Water expelled Hapee Toothpaste's fourth-quarter comeback to post an 86-75 triumph and secure sole second place.

Neil Raboca and Nikki Sablan came to the Wizards' rescue in the final period after Hapee's Arvin Ayag, Brad Hagenian and Lester Lazaro conspired to come a 23-point gap, 70-47, to just a single-digit deficit at 77-68.

"All teams have the ability to come back," said Wizards coach Ray Banal. "Good thing we had enough cushion and we were able to finish Hapee's second-chance points."

Windon Pharex, though, failed to hold on to its 10-point buffer as Superior Dive rallied to an 81-62 victory in the second game.

Erick Rodriguez sparkled with 22 points and nine rebounds as the Sparks record-ed their second straight win against cellar-dweller.

JR Cardo gave 16, including a wide-open layup with 17.8 seconds left after the Pharex had moved within 83-82.

Jonathan Alcaraz added seven of his 13 points in the 8-and quarter, while PG Jared also hustled a key triple that gave the Sparks their first lead in the second half, 79-77, after trailing by as many as 17-55.

Hapee fell to a share of third place with idle Barges Ring at 2-2, while Pharex declined to its fifth straight setback.

Meanwhile, the Discovery Suites-Philippine Team will test its mettle against a quiet team from China in a goodwill match at 3:45 p.m. today at the Lyceum gym in Manila.

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UST tossers nail 2nd finals berth

By Cedelliff Tapao

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS stayed perfect in five games as the Tigresses outlasted Adamson, 17-25, 25-14, 25-20, 9-25, 15-13, last night to reach the finals of the Shakey's V-League second conference at the Arena in San Juan.

In a clash that took a championship atmosphere, the Tigresses matched the Lady Falcons' power, then outclassed them all the way in the last two points of the decider to forge a best-of-three championship rematch with the Ateneo Lady Stags.

The Tigresses beat the Lady Stags in both championships of the 2007 season. Those losses marked the third consecutive conference that NRC, the three-time NCAA champion, finished runner-up in the V-League.

No team led by more than two points in the fifth set which featured 12 deadlocks. But with the game tied at 13, Adamson blinked after its nerve-wracked Angelica Quining sent her serve wide, before Angela Benting was called for a net violation, sealing the match.

"We got lucky," said UST coach Cesael Delos Santos after the Tigresses secured their sixth finals appearance in the five-year history of the league. "They (Tigresses) really wanted to make it to the finals."

Delos Santos declared their team deserving to be in the conference, Angeni Imac Mesa, who suffered a stroke last March and was unable to return to the Tigresses' fold.

Rose Iberial led UST with 19 points, while Mary Jane Bido had 15.

UST's Judy Anne Caballejo harrasses setup off Angelica Quining of Adamson.

Pacquiao gets stronger as De La Hoya tiff nears

By Solven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

LOS ANGELES—BOXING SUperstar Manny Pacquiao continues to dazzle and puzzle everyone around to him as he seems to get stronger by the day less than two weeks before his wagon battle with the legendary Oscar De La Hoya on Dec. 6 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Vegas.

Pacquiao was apparently fired up by a report saying he continues to be the underdog in the upcoming duel.

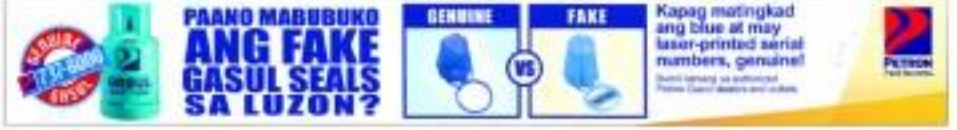
The MGM Sportsbook indicated two days ago that De La Hoya is pegged as a minus-160 favorite to Pacquiao, Pacquiao, while the Filipino is at plus-130 to defeat the Golden Boy.

Stunning Pacquiao did an eye-popping 30-round workout under Freddie Roach and Filipino trainers Rubey Fernandez and Boboy Sor.

"I think I can handle Boy-ette," Pacquiao said of De La Hoya.

"The pressure is there but that gives me more motivation to train hard for the fight.

"I've had a great training camp," Pacquiao added. "I'm very happy. This is the hardest I've trained and it's the biggest fight of my boxing career."



Air21, SMB settle scores

PBA board decides today whether to uphold protest

By Marang P. Castillo

THIS GAME WILL SELL ITSELF—FOR A reason most clubs can only dream about, two protagonists and no-bars respective fans.

"We want to represent everyone that we beat from the last time," Air21 coach Bo Perasol said of his 82-78 crowd-clash today with San Miguel Beer, which sees their bitterly-disputed first-round confrontation in the 32nd PBA Philippine Cup eliminations.

"I'm sure they also want to beat us, to prove that they really did lose," Perasol added.

The Express—who is up with the Dragons at the Araneta Coliseum some five hours after the board would have decided on commissioner Noli Eala's ruling junking the protest filed by Air21 which contested San Miguel's victory on time-lost morning.

Board members are to uphold or reverse Eala's call at the league's offices around lunch time.

Air21 (one win-four losses) and San Miguel (four wins-one loss) are tied at the fifth spot of the team standings with identical win-loss records.

Both teams will be allowed to use the three-point line regarding the matter," board chair Joaquin Tilles of Manila Electric Company.

"After that, if we don't reach a consensus, then we will be deciding the issues on (a spread) by voting."

Air21 will be facing a different San Miguel crew today (no Dail has lost its last three games.

The Express, meanwhile, won their last two outings, outshining their rivals from the bottom of the standings and into a tie for third at 3-3 with defending champion Sta. Lucia.

Sta. Lucia, also on a streak, goes for four straight when they drag its out with (on and off Talk 'N Text in the 7:30(p.m. main game.

The Realtors have managed to stay afloat even with Ryan Reyes missing their last five games. The sixth sophomore, though, is expected to suit up against the Tropang Texters wearing a brace to protect a bruised back.

Martinez, Albania win shy of medals

GIRON—ALTHAM FUTURA (Gonzales Mikhail Martinez and Annie Albania posted easy wins yesterday in advance to the quarterfinals of the 2008 Alfa Pharma-UAAP Beauty Championships at the Ateneo Avenue gymnasium here.

Martinez clobbered a taller Ateneo Brockman of Meridien and Wenger, 15-2, while Albania topped with Sacred Dorsang of the Diliman Lions, 10-0.

The 5(2-pound) Martinez who stood 5'4") when she was captured by the referee for "open gloves punching," allowing Brockman to trim the gap to 5-2 after the opening round.

Thailand Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Albania, unscathed, went on a scoring binge right from the first bell.

Martinez will battle China's Cheng Dong, who beat Perol Pharma's Pinoli Rosales, 7-0, while Albania will fight Korean Song Hye-Sung, who whipped Warrior Brenda Duenckmann, 11-6.

Flyweight Andrea Ural and featherweight Josie Gilbuen also plunge into action today.

Ural, silver medalist in the 51(0-kg Asian Championships, will battle Diana Theodhi of Remarin while Gilbuen will take on Joana Mendoza of Mindanao.

A win by any of the four Filipinos will ensure the Asian Pl2(3 team of at least a bronze.

RP chessers end Olympiad stint versus Argentinians

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

DRESDEN, GERMANY—AS EVEN MATCH

Gilbert the knighted Swiss of Paisley Jo and John Paul Gomez, team captain Eugene Torre said the Philippines can even pull off an upset over 10th ranked Argentina Tuesday in the 8-rd second of the 39th El Olimpiada.

Involved, the Filipinos—with Rogelio Antonio Jr. and Darmic Layo completing their final lineup—need to beat the Argentinians to finish in the top 10 and improve on their 44th-place finish two years ago in Turin, Italy.

The 33-year-old GM (Elo 2611) takes over the top board from Rorg Villamayor and is slightly favored to win before GM Rufino Mc gave (2591) while Arnold-over GM Arnaud (2519) tries to end his campaign with Fourth against IM Anton Kovalyov on Board 3.

GM Gonzales (2600) moves up to board 2 against GM Fernando Peralta (2557) while GM Layo (2505) mans board 4 against IM Diego Flores (2466).

Sir Gonzales, the tough finish-round assignment gives him a chance to redeem himself from an incident by his commander that he had been opting to rest against Najdorf.

Unfortunately sleeping for nine just cost us, not his. His ranking, Gonzales said he begged off from playing some games because he was not feeling well due to hemorrhoids.

But co- hen- then former Fide president Florencio Campomanes lambasted him, when he opted to rest against the Netherlands in Round 10 after helping the country win against Belgium.

Sure National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Butch Pichay called at Gonzales' decision by ordering Torre to take him out of the team lineup for Round 9.

And for a guy with a sore butt, Gonzales (2 wins, 1 draw, 6 losses) said he will proceed with chess competition for another tournament in Spain after the Olympiad, instead of going home and seeking his medical problem.

So and Sorrel braved the minus 4-degree weather during Monday's rest day to window-shop with their teammates here.

Filipino jins scoop 6 golds

SIX MEMBERS OF THE ISAMF PETSOS junior taekwondo team bagged six gold medals in the recent 4th Korea Open international meet in Gyeonggi, South Korea.

Charlize Bautista and Nikita Cunilla Manalo led the Filipinos' impressive performance by nailing the junior women's flyweight and featherweight titles, respectively.

The other gold medalists were Ianessa Leigh Anne Magali, veteran Ash Zeldy and Mary Jeanessa Lungit and brother Ernest Ysidro.

Lungit scored a big 7-1 triumph over her Korean rival in the finals while Ysidro nipped another Korean for the men's junior feather title.

The Filipinos also captured three silver and four bronze medals in the two-day tournament which drew tough junior jins from 16 countries.

"They performed very well, they did our country proud," said Philippine Taekwondo Association coach Robert N. Aventajado.

The Filipino silver medalists were Jr. silver Noel Lim, light Ariel Ray Infante and welter Gerry del Rosario, while the bronze winners were Justine Jude Avalero (fin), Jeanessa Lynn Agull Tindoy, feather Aris Mark Idanelo and light Gelo Jose Alma.

Archers eye PCCL Last 8 berth vs USC cagers

By Jasmine W. Payo

LA SALLE RETURNS TO THE HARDCOURT for the first time since hosting or three rival teams in the UAAP finals.

Still harassed by JR Cuan and Rico Maierhofer, the Green Archers battle the Cebu-based University of San Carlos Warriors in the 2008 Philippine Collegiate Champions League "Sweet 16" today at The Arena in San Juan.

The Archers shoot for a final 4 slot in the 4 p.m. knockout duel, right after the Mapua Cardinals and Manuel L. Quezon U Stallions squareoff at 2 p.m.

Today's winners will join UAAP champion Ateneo and three-time NCAA titlist San Beda, the first two squads to barge into the top eight after trading majestic appearances in the opener.

If Franz Pumaren wants La Salle to victory, his Archers will go up against the winner between his younger brother Diodo's University of the East and the University of Visayas.

The winners in the Cardinals-Stallions duel, meanwhile, will have to bumble the Eagles in the semi round.

Prinley Pierrez, Jerwin Mangahas and JV Weldmarie will be back for the Archers, who haven't seen action in any post-season tournament since the UAAP wrapped up two months ago.

Mapua ace scorer Jeremiah Jones suffered ligament sprain in his right ankle during the Cardinals' 80-68 win over Letran in the Final Four of the NCAA season.

Jones, who averaged 15.6 points per game in the NCAA, is expected to be out for at least two weeks.

Mapua coach Jerry Codiñera will be without Jones in the Cardinals' duel with the Stallions.

Codiñera, however, is confident that his squad can still overcome the loss of Jones.

"We've been playing without Jeremiah for the last two games and we've been doing fine," Codiñera said.

Mapua is coming off a 80-68 win over Letran in the Final Four of the NCAA season.

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"We've been playing without Jeremiah for the last two games and we've been doing fine," Codiñera said.

Guiao lays down RP five rules

By Mocang R. Castillo

ALL BUT TWO OF THE 14 ARES TASKED WITH taking the country back to the world basketball scene attended their first practice session yesterday, not really to sweat it out and hone their skills but to listen to master tactician Yeng Guiao lay down his game — and five rules that will govern this Philippine Team.

The fleshed-out full roster was in to observe, to listen and to learn from the man who will be calling the shots for the national squad in the 2009 FIBA Asia Championship in Qatar.

The first-year head coach, however, was in no observing mood as he immediately put the players through a rigorous workout that lasted for more than two hours.

"Everybody's responsible. Nobody has to score 10 points for this team to win," he added. "All you guys need to do is to take the open shots, look for your open teammates, run the patterns, and make good decisions... that's it. That's how we're going to win."

Guiao's first rule: Defense.

"We will focus on defense. We will not allow anybody to score easy baskets against us. We will make sure that we will be tough defensively," he said.

The second rule: Rebounding.

"We will be aggressive in rebounding. We will not allow our opponents to get second shots," he said.

The third rule: Ball movement.

"We will move the ball around. We will not allow our opponents to dribble the ball too much," he said.

The fourth rule: Shot selection.

"We will take good shots. We will not take bad shots," he said.

The fifth rule: Conditioning.

"We will be in good shape. We will not allow our opponents to get tired," he said.

RP team tacticianer Yeng Guiao preps up his troops for "war" on their first practice session at The Arena.

Those, Willie Miller, Arwind Santos, Rainlel de Ocampo, Gabe Norwood, Hans Reyes, Jared Dillinger and Jay-Jay Helterbrand — were not impressed their willingness to do the long grind ahead.

Also present were PBA commissioner Sonny Barrios and operations manager Bobbi Santos and Team's assistants Boyet Mahinay and Leo Avenilla.

The team needs to win the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (SeaBA) tournament next year to qualify for the Fiba Asia Championship set in China.

Orduna guns for Asian Karting title in Macau

ORDUNA

FIRED OFF SEC-52 session as BOR Junior Navine Karter of the Year, Joey Orduna eyes a bigger crown in the 2008 Asian Karting Open Championships on Nov. 27 to 30 at the Kartodromo de Guia in Macau.

Orduna began the Asian karting season with a sweep of both the pedford and final race in the Manny Mcduff leg but wound up fourth in the Philippine stop.

He came back strong in the Indonesian leg that put him back in the lead. Although he missed the Thailand leg, he took the title race with 832 points, 27 ahead of compatriot Rene Paura-gute.

Orduna, 11, said winning the Asian Junior BOR will be a tremendous feat.

"It's been a challenging season but it ended quite friendly for us," said Orduna, a student of International School-Manila.

Steve Silva, Contributor

PHINMA INT'L NETFEST

Patrimonio siblings advance

By Romina S. Acosta

PROVING THEY HAVE THE TALENT TO GO with their famous surname, siblings Anne Christine and Alexis Clarice Patrimonio dispatched their opposite rivals to advance to the second round of the Phinma International Junior Tennis Championships Week 1 at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Anne Christine, the 16-year-old daughter of two-time PBA Most Valuable Player Alvin Patrimonio, dominated Bernice Jessica Coscarelli, 6-1, 6-0. She will next face fourth seed Alex Cigunabon, who eliminated local wild card Ma. Regina Santiago, 7-6, 6-3, 7-5 in 1.

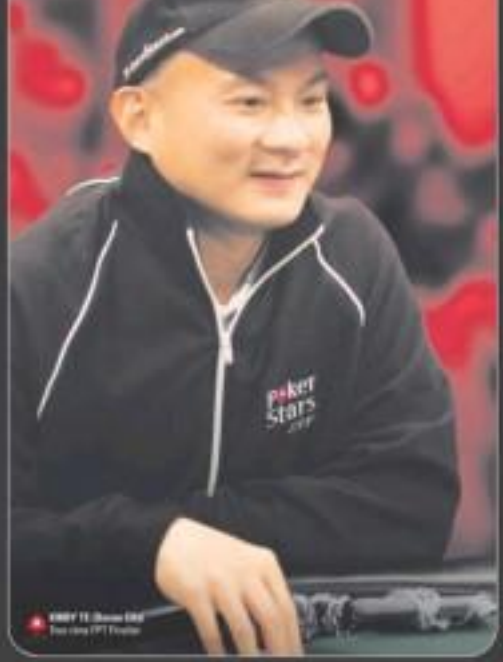
Anne Clarice celebrated her 15th birthday yesterday with a masterful 6-1, 6-0 victory over Italian Francesca Mazzali. She will meet the winner between No. 3 Alexandra Waller-Ordonio and Kristina Baptista of Hungary.

Anne Christine reached the fourth round of the FILIPINO Junior ITF Circuit 2 last week—her first step to advance to the main draw of an ITF event—while her younger sister failed to make it past the qualifiers of the Solaire ITF.

The siblings, who have trained in Spain for the last three years, also lost their first round doubles match in the Wildcard event to Indonesians Jessy Rompies and Lavinia Tananta.

Also gaining second-round slots were top seed Luksika Kumkhum of Thailand, who downed Elena Bell of Great Britain, 6-2, 6-1, and compatriot Peang Peanuam, a 6-4, 6-2 winner over Riko Nagai of Japan.

Sun top seed Francis Casey Alcantara also advanced into the first Strata, 6-4, 6-0, while wild card Jason Hernandez rallied past Tim Clarence Smorgonbind, 4-6, 6-1, 6-3.



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December 13 and 14, 2008
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SPORTS

WORLD BRIEFS

Fifa bans Peru booters

ASUNCION—Fifa has banned Peru from international competition, as official of the South American football Confederation said. "Fifa has suspended Peru from all activity," CSF secretary general Eduardo de Lazzarini of the Fifa headquarters in the Paraguayan capital on Monday. *Reuters*

Troubled GM ends Woods deal

DETROIT—General Motors Corp. said Monday it is ending its nine-year endorsement deal with golf superstar Tiger Woods as the automaker continues to overperform its normal sales downturn in a quarter century. *AP*

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Yao lifts Rockets; Magic trip Bucks

HEWT'S Michael Beasley grabs a rebound off the Rockets' Chuck Hayes.

HOUSTON—Yao Ming scored 30 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, Tom Arnyo scored 29 and the Houston Rockets finished off a perfect three-game road trip against the Eastern Conference with an 107-98 win over the Miami Heat on Monday.

Dwyane Wade scored 23 points for Miami, dropping to 7-for-23 shooting. Mario Chalmers added a career-best 23, including five 3-pointers, for the Heat, who also got 17 points from Shawn Marion and 14 from Michael Beasley.

The Rockets finished their Eastern Conference road swing 3-0, marking only the fourth time in the last 12 years that they have gotten on a trip lasting at least three games.

At Orlando, Florida, Dwight Howard had 24 points and 13 rebounds to help Orlando beat Milwaukee.

Hedo Turkoglu and Rashard Lewis each added 23 points for the Magic.

Richard Jefferson scored 25 points to lead Milwaukee, which lost another league to a left knee bruise in the third quarter.

At Charlotte, North Carolina, Ed Augustin scored 28 points and added a career-high 11 assists. Backcourtmate Raymond Felton added 23 points, and Charlotte used its superspeed and deep lineup to beat Philadelphia, 93-84.

The 6-foot Augustin and the 6-1 Felton had their best game together since coach Larry Brown inserted the rookie duopolist for the starting lineup three games ago.

MIA-TOTALS: Daniels 0, Hawkins 4, Jones 1-2, Miranda 1-2, Arenas 7-17, Haywood 3-6, Miranda 0-1, Wright 1-3, Ellis 4-8, Pollard 1-8, Jones 0-0, Bee Shaw 0-0, Shaw 0-7.

SPORTSWATCH

23 breeders pace SJC 'Rambulan'

TWENTY-THREE PARTICIPANTS AS THIS CHAMPIONSHIP RACE HOSTED BY THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL RACEHORSE BREEDING DERBY AT SAN JUAN COLISEUM.

The indoor-outdoor coliseum resumes today at the same venue with more than 100 lights in the last elimination round.

The five pointers include Joey Jinko Santos, Butch Muñoz, Perry Marquez, Gerard Gerbas, former congressman Benny "Boy" Rayala, Mayor Dennis Pineda, Edel Alcala, Ronnie Dupacchino, Tony Fernandez, Raymond Tuna, Allan Suarez, Edmundo Issa and Jose Eddie Bong Pineda.

3 cockers shine in 'Bakbakan'

CEBUANO BREEDER JOE CHUA WATCHES his prized rooting qualities Bebi Gaviola of Batangas and Pablo Antonio on his with nine wins in 10 fights in the 68-68 balloon Bakbakan 19-Derby at Makati Coliseum Monday night.

The championship battle ensures today at the same venue 66 fights or so.

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Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nuñona

BUSINESS

Stocks jump 6%, peso rallies to 49.455 to $1

Wall St. rally lifts crude

WALL STREET'S BENCHMARK COMMODITY MARKETS HIGHER as oil prices jumped 9 percent Monday, though they slipped back a bit in Asian trading yesterday.

After jumping $4.07 overnight, light, sweet crude for January delivery was down $1 to $55.58 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by midday yesterday in Singapore.

In currencies, the dollar fell to ¥96.26 yen from ¥96.80 yen late Monday. The euro also slid to $1.283 from $1.2925. AP

Regional markets rebound on US rescue of Citigroup

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

STOCKS SURGED 6 PERCENT YESTERDAY, MIMICKING THE record rise on Wall Street overnight after the US government's bailout of ailing financial giant Citigroup, a move widely seen as averting a collapse in the financial system, traders said.

The peso also rallied to 49.455 to a dollar yesterday as local and regional financial markets cheered the US government's move.

The local currency, which gained P0.375 from Monday's closing of 49.83 to $1, was also being supported by the influx of remittances from overseas Filipinos ahead of the Christmas season.

"The US rescue of Citigroup was very good. [Its global numbers] alone is still prevent a financial collapse. [It] is bigger than Lehman Brothers," screwdriver Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Ramos.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index jumped 108.46 points to 1,908.16. The broader all-shares market also rose 4.27 percent or 49.68 points to 1,212.15.

"The signal is now was that the US was

IN THIS ISSUE

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- **Banks' bad loans up** by 2.54% to P94B in Sept. /B4
- **Gov't paid P570.4B** in debts in 10 mos. /B5
- **Singapore bank a bit** more optimistic over RP growth /B10

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Korean starts $120-M hotel-casino project in Subic

5,000 jobs to be generated

By Rocco M. Domingo

A KOREAN FIRM HAS STARTED GROUNDwork on a $120-million hotel-casino resort project at the Subic Bay Freeport.

Armand C. Arreza, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority administrator, said the 13-story building—to be called Ocean 9 Casino and Hotel Resort—would rise along Subic's Waterfront Drive and was expected to play a key role in making the area a main tourist destination.

Arreza said Grand Utopia Inc.'s integrated resort and hotel will also serve as a convention center with a central stage for live entertainment and performances, as well as a 100-sqq. type of walkway that could be used for fashion shows.

"The Ocean 9 is designed to be the most beautiful hotel in the Subic Bay Freeport," he said. "The project, which is expected to yield more than 5,000 jobs, is scheduled for completion within two years."

Ocean 9's main facility will be a 16-story hotel that will occupy an area of 9,173 square meters, while a secondary building that will occupy 4,300 sq. m. will house a three-story casino.

According to Grand Utopia, the complex will be built using cutting-edge technology and advanced architectural systems to make "a unique design that will blend comfort with entertainment."

The first floor of the casino, where some 500 gaming tables will be clustered, will also have an organic light exciting shots system for virtual effects such as scenes depicting a naturalistic volcanic activity.

The other side of the main hall will have between 60 and 120 shops that will sell luxury-brand goods, including premium items from Italy and France.

Arreza said the Ocean 9 was considered as the a related infrastructure in Subic's bid to attract more foreign tourists to the growing number of holiday destinations in the region.

The hotel will be located near the Alava Pier, which is being developed by another firm as a passenger terminal for cruise ships.

The pier is also being used for berthing by visiting American Navy ships that regularly dock in Subic during military exercises between the Philippines and the United States.

Stocks ...

Pumapaga B1

ten close to allow another Lehman kollapse in Japan and that they are committed to restore the confidence in the financial industry," said Citiseconomist Ernesto Ilustrisimo said.

Other markets rallied after Wall Street and European markets climbed Monday on news that the US government would take a $400-billion stake in Citigroup and guarantee hundreds of billions of dollars of risky assets.

In Japan, which had been on holiday Monday, the Nikkei 225 stock average soared 403.14 points, or 5.2 percent, to 8,023.93.

Australia's benchmark S&P/ASX200 index surged 5.6 percent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index rose nearly 3 percent to 12,946.42.

The US Dow Jones industrials rocketed 396.07 points, or 4.81 percent, to 8,441.04 Monday.

"The bailout gave investors some comfort that the US is prepared to take bolder steps to prevent further downside risks to the financial system," added RBS Rim Eng Securities president Lorenzo Reyes.

The peso, which decreased to break past the psychological 50-$1 barrier last week, yesterday closed to its intraday high of 49.44 after hitting a low of 49.66 to a dollar.

Inhouse or the spot foreign exchange market Philippine Dealing System data improved to $807 million from Monday's $295.5 million.

Jonathan Ravidas, chief strategist at Banco de Oro Unibank, said yesterday's finish at 50 suggested a temporary correction following the peso.

"Expect peso to test the 48.40-25 levels in the coming days," Ravidas said. Trading range for today is seen at 48.30-48.60 to a dollar.

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

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ISSUE SIZE	PhP 5 billion
OFFER PERIOD	Nov 25 – Dec 5, 2008
INTEREST RATE	8.45% p.a. [1]
ISSUE DATE	December 12, 2008
MATURITY	December 12, 2018
OPTIONAL REDEMPTION [1]	December 13, 2013
MINIMUM INVESTMENT	PHP500,000 [2]

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Jump if you want cheaper electricity

WHO IS THIS LAWMAKER WHO OWNS the figurine in a big-time power pilferage racket, and is now trying to pass himself off as a power consumer advocate?

Believe it or not, this politician was accused of pilfering electricity not only for his home but for a resort he owns in a subdivision.

A source familiar with the power industry said that the politician developed a subdivision during the late 1990s during a stint in local political power.

He answered the buyers by advertising that houses that would dot his village would be "energy-efficient." Unbeknownst to the buyers, the houses' meters indeed showed below-average consumption rates—but strained suitably.

What suspicious Meralco engineers investigated the houses, however, they discovered the presence of suspicious devices which the "resort" called "energy-efficiency."

According to our source, these devices were installed in such a creative manner, and caused the power meters to turn at a slower pace.

Further investigation revealed—to the horror of homeowners—that the devices were embedded under the concrete encasement of the houses. They had to be removed with jackhammers.

Nowadays, this politician is trying to repackage himself as a power industry consumer advocate, to the consternation and frustration of the people at Meralco.

But then again, having contributed five hundred to the company's system loss, that person certainly knows what he's talking about. Boobie L. Lucas

Blue Christmas

PEOPLE visiting BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. time days won't miss the colonial sapphire and silver-themed Christmas tree that adorns his office.

Some say it is said that the guy is celebrating his role in the Yuletide season but the victory of Ateneo's basketball team over UNLP actually rooted in Subic.

Who said this will be the gloomiest Christmas in years? Doris C. Dumlao

Blue Christmas

ONE organization that is really feeling the blues, however, notwithstanding the to-date affirmation of its clutch is PSEi index.

The insurance gi-

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And just as we might think the season is good enough for a present, a BIG flight ticket will be given away. Maribuhay Miles may be available just around the corner, starting the season of the merry regime.

The promo is open to all Maribuhay Miles World and Platinum MasterCard users.

BIZ BUZZ

By the slug!

and had to cancel its planned Christmas bash at the SMX Convention Center in exchange for a simpler party at the Dhilton auditorium along UN Avenue, according to its president and CEO Jose L. Cuisia Jr.

Philam obviously does not want a repeat of the press bashing that followed the decision of its parent AIG to hold a plush spa party in LA and an expensive pawnshop hosting party for its agents last month, last as the company received a massive bailout measure of US taxpayers.

Expect a lot of long faces at the company as Philam officials and this year's Christmas party will surely be a "simple get together at a much reduced cost." Dorian L. Lucas

BDO overtakes Metrobank

COMPETITION is heating up among the country's biggest banks.

Retail tycoon Henry Sy's Banco de Oro Unibank has overtaken Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. as the country's largest in terms of assets as of end-September this year, reporting total resources of P927 billion versus Metrobank's P726.1 billion.

BDO also announced that it's now the number one in deposits, loans, and assets under management.

The stock market bust was that the Sy family had brought back to the Philippines some, if not the bulk, of its offshore investments amid the global financial meltdown and consolidation of the money in BDO some analysts estimated that about P80 billion was brought in, resulting in a big surge in deposits in the third quarter even after an initial shakeout caused by the Lehman Brothers shakeout. So what if the third quarter was really bad in terms of bottom line?

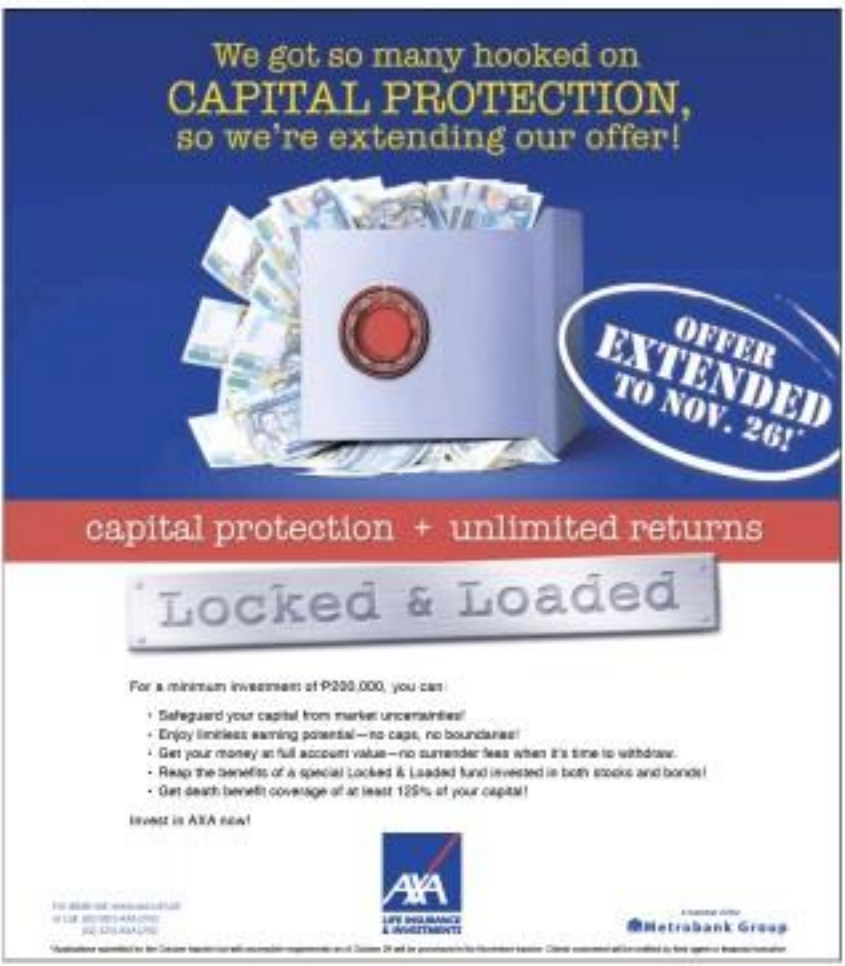
Banking sources said Metrobank, which has held the number one slot for many years, isn't sulking this matter sitting down and will do "something" to regain its bragging rights this fourth quarter. Doris C. Dumlao

Changing of the guard at Alveda

JOSE RAMON Alveda, president and CEO of Alveda Equity Ventures Inc., turned 60 this year and is set to retire next month after serving the conglomerate for more than 30 years.

His successor has been named yet, but for the reputable Cebu-based Alveda family—with its deep bench of fourth generation talents and mostly US-educated technocrats—succession is not a problem.

Based on the organizational hierarchy, EVP/COO Ernesto "Moncho" Alveda is next in line. Naturally, however, nothing's carved in stone yet. Doris C. Dumlao



Banks' bad loans up by 2.54% to ₱94B in Sept.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COMMERCIAL BANKING system's stock of bad loans inched up in September at the peak of the 'third-factor' shakeout that led to the collapse of US investment banking giant Lehman Brothers.

Based on the latest Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas report, the nonperforming loans held by commercial banks went up to ₱94 percent of total loans as of end-September from the post-Asian crisis low of 3.5 percent in August.

The latest NPL ratio, however, was an improvement from by 1.15 percentage points from the 5.19 percent ratio posted a year ago.

Commercial banks monitored a downward trend in their NPL-to-total loans ratio in six consecutive months prior to the uptick in September. They were able to keep the NPL ratio below 4 percent from June to August.

However, seven big commercial banks in the country had reported ₱385 million worth of combined direct and indirect exposure to Lehman Brothers, which declared bankruptcy in September. Most of these banks have already booked loss provisions for their respective exposure. The amount, however, accounted for less than 1 percent of the exposed banks' total assets.

Across the industry, the total insured loans went up by 2.54 percent in September from month-ago level, while total loan portfolio remained by 0.98 percent.

In peso terms, the NPLs rose to ₱94 billion in September from ₱91.07 billion in the previous month, while total loan portfolio went down to ₱3.331 trillion from ₱3.29 trillion in the same period.

The decline in loans stemmed from lower inter-bank lending transactions during the month.

In the meantime, the banks' stock of foreclosed assets—also called real and other properties acquired (Rapo)—fell by 1.97 percent to ₱142.95 billion in September from month-ago level.

This brought the total nonperforming assets—the sources of loans and Rapo combined—to ₱236.39 billion, 0.22 percent lower than the level in August.

For every peso of bad loans, the banking sector had up about ₱0.95 to loan provisions at end-September, slightly lower than the ₱0.99 provisioning in the previous month. Reserves for bad assets also declined to ₱0.49 for every peso, compared to ₱0.49 in the previous month.

The ratio of nonperforming loans to total loans stood at 2.87 percent as of September. Compared to the previous month, there was a 2.52 percent decline in gross nonperforming loans to ₱97.98 billion.

The commercial banking system's stock of bad loans peaked at a ratio of total loans at more than 20 percent in 2002, prompting banks to be more cautious in extending loans.

BPO firm expanding workforce in RP

RP exports to Taiwan up

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS TO Taiwan grew by 7.3 percent to $1.63 billion in the nine months to September as the Philippines ranked five greater market access for its agricultural products.

In the same period last year, shipments from the Philippines to Taiwan amounted to $1.72 billion.

Data from Taipei's Government Information Office showed that from January to September, the two-way merchandise trade between the Philippines and Taiwan improved by 7.4 percent to $5.7 billion from $5.3 billion in the same period last year.

Shipments from Taiwan to the Philippines during the period amounted to $3.85 billion, up by 7.3 percent from $3.59 billion a year ago.

As of end-September, Taiwan posted a trade surplus with the Philippines of $2 billion, up 7.6 percent from $1.87 billion a year ago.

The Taiwan CIO also reported that the Philippines remained Taiwan's 14th largest trading partner.

The Philippines account for 1.4 percent of the island economy's total global trade, which was valued at $400.39 billion.

China remains Taiwan's largest trading partner with a 20.15-percent share. Raymal H. Domingo

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INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The Cooperative intends to purchase the following for the construction of 15 Barangays within the Province of Negros Occ. and Iloilo Province:

	Name of Work	
1.	Turbine and all	15 Barangays
2.	Line installation and materials	15 Barangays
3.	Procurement of Transformers	15 Barangays

The BAGELCO invites bids for the above Projects. Only pre-qualified bidders shall be allowed to bid. Qualification documents, bidding documents and other information may be secured from the office of the BAGELCO Bidding Committee.

BIDDING SCHEDULE

1.	Bid Documents Available	Nov. 27 to Dec. 10, 2008	
2.	Deadline of Submission of Bid Documents	Dec. 10, 2008	1:00 PM
3.	Opening of Bids	Dec. 10, 2008	1:00 PM
4.	Post-qualification	Dec. 10, 2008	1:00 PM
5.	Bid Evaluation	Dec. 10, 2008	1:00 PM

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be obtained upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P 5,000.00 at the address on the left of this ad.

BAGELCO reserves the right to reject or accept any or all bids or to cancel the bidding process at any time prior to the award of contract without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ROMEO M. MATIAS
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PS. No. 12-8-12-08)

What does it take to invest in challenging market conditions?

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Questions of Policies

Honesto C. General

THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE REPRODUCTIVE Health Bill No. 3042 swirls around contraception and abortion.

Even Catholics have differing views. They should not. All they have to do is read up on the Catechism of the Catholic Church issued by Pope John Paul II in 1992. Here is what the Catechism says about contraception and abortion.

On contraception, the Catechism, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, are in conformity with the objective criteria of morality. These methods respect the bodies of spouses, encourage tenderness between them and favor the education of authentic freedom. In contrast, "every procedure which, whether in the foreseeing of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible" is contrary to the moral law.

Then the bizarre language that supresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife, the proper basis for welcoming a child, objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This lends not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality... The difference, both anthropological and moral, between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle... involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality.

The more basic the responsibility for its (own) well-being. In this capacity it is legitimate for it to intervene to secure the demography of the population. This can be exercised in the form of wise and honest information, but certainly not by authoritarian, coercive measures. The state may not legitimately usurp the initiative of spouses, who have the primary responsibility for the procreation and education of their children. It is not authorized to pursue demographic regulations by means contrary to the moral law.

Abortion. Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.

Since the first century, the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law.

Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "Procure who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication latae sententiae, "by the very commission of the offense," and subject to the conditions provided by Canon law. The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the evil committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death."

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the most vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined ... As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be assured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights."

Why I add my puny voice to those on what Filipinos think of Catholic doctrine are vastly irrelevant and irreverent. What will the politicos do next? Conduct a survey on suburbicide or on the Ten Commandments should be abolished?

Finally, if anybody is wondering, my wife and I raised four sons and four daughters. I turn over to you my grandchildren. And I am their best friend.

City Government of Cambarayan
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Cambarayan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date / Time: Prequalification Documents Fee	Date / Time: Deadline of Submission of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
Security Services	₱18,000,000.00	December 15, 2008 8:00 AM	December 15, 2008 8:00 AM	₱10,000.00
Janitorial Services	₱15,000,000.00	December 15, 2008 8:00 AM	December 15, 2008 8:00 AM	₱10,000.00

Qualified contractors shall be available only in the Mayor's Office, Cambarayan, complete with documents. Bidders are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference on December 10, 2008 and to submit all documents not later than the time and date stipulated.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at Cambarayan Main Conference Hall, City Hall, Cambarayan City.

The Bidder shall only post proposals for projects of its Technical Proposal in one complete envelope, and shall be labeled with the project name, bidder's name and address. Bidders shall submit their bid proposals in another envelope labeled in the same manner as the technical proposal.

For more information, please call the Procurement Coordinator at the Bids and Awards Division at telephone no. 342-1-555.

The City Government of Cambarayan reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all the above bids without liability, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) DR. MARIA L. ARNOLA
BAC Chairman

(PS. No. 11-08)

San Jose del Monte City Water District
Road 1, Minuyan, City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Re-bid

The San Jose del Monte City Water District (SJDMCWD) invites qualified contractors to apply for prequalification and to bid for the following projects:

DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	BID SECURITY (1% OF ABC)	COST OF BID DOCS
Install 3 Line Generator	₱ 1,267,000.00	₱ 12,670.00	₱1,000.00

Prequalification documents should be submitted by prospective bidders not later than November 30, 2008 at the SJDMCWD Bidding Office, Minuyan, City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. Bidding documents may be purchased upon submission of the prequalification documents.

All prospective bidders are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference Meeting (Contractors' Day) on November 30, 2008 at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Minuyan, City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

The Water District reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect therein, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the District.

ACTIVITIES	DATE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	November 26, 2008 to December 10, 2008
2. Pre-bid conference	December 1, 2008
3. Deadline of submission of bids	December 10, 2008
4. Bid opening	December 10, 2008
5. Post-qualification	December 10, 2008
6. Notice of award	To be announced later

A complete set of bid documents will be available only at prequalified bidders upon presentation of the Bidder's Eligibility Card from the Bids and Awards Committee.

The City Water District reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all of the above bids without liability, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder.

(Sgd.) MICHAEL CARLO M. JR.
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PS. No. 11-08)

Gov't paid ₱570.4B in debts in 10 mos.

By Michelle V. Rarus

DEBTS PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT FROM January to October this year amounted to ₱570.37 billion, up from ₱563.31 billion in the same period last year.

In October alone, the government settled ₱93.017 billion worth of debts, up from ₱53.31 billion in the same month last year.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that of the liabilities settled in the first 10 months of the year, principal obligations accounted for ₱318.08 billion while ₱252.29 billion represented interest charges.

The government uses internally generated funds, including tax revenues, to pay its debts. However, it also issues new bonds to pay maturing principal obligations.

When classified according to source of loans, the biggest share of ₱452.92 billion represented loans obtained from the domestic market. Foreign obligations paid amounted to ₱117.44 billion.

The government has been borrowing more from domestic lenders rather than foreign sources to minimize its exposure to foreign-exchange risks.

The amount spent by the government to pay interest on obligations are up more than 20 percent of the annual budget. It is the government's policy to religiously and promptly service its debts, believing that doing otherwise would compromise its country's credit image.

Government economic managers said that the share of interest payments to the national budget had dwindled over the years to about 20 percent from more than 30 percent in the early 2000s.

The Department of Finance earlier said the government would be able to substantially reduce the amount of debts it had to pay yearly if its budget deficit was wiped out—as when its tax and other revenue collections were enough to cover its spending requirement.

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1. UP TO ₱2,000,000* COLLEGE FUND IN CASH! You will receive the College Fund in lump sum cash or in installment - with the balance earning interest or the policy simultaneously after your child's 17th birthday.
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3. WAIVER OF PREMIUM PAYMENTS In case of Payor's untimely death or total and permanent disability within the 5-year paying period, all unpaid premiums will be waived and the policy will be considered fully paid.
4. *EARLY PRE-COLLEGE CASH ALLOWANCE Should the Payor meet an untimely death or suffer total and permanent disability, your child will receive a pre-college cash allowance or a yearly basis of as much as ₱200,000* or 10% of the College Fund to finance his elementary and high school education.
5. BUILT-IN LIFE INSURANCE PROTECTION FOR YOUR CHILD! Your child is automatically insured for as much as ₱2,000,000* face amount upon age 17.
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Yearly Pre-College Cash Allowance: → ₱ 200,000
Life Insurance Benefits:
Life Insurance protection until age 17 → ₱ 2,000,000
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*Based on Peso Policy

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MOTORING

Editor Conor D. Macgowing

2009 FORD FOCUS

Everything but the kitchen sink

By Tess R. Salazar

THERE IS SOMETHING you don't see every day: Ford throwing in the final economy of a 6-speed manual into the convenience of an automatic transmission. The Blue Oval's newest automatic is its own version of double-clutch transmission (Powershift) suitable for street driving, housed inside a European luxury design sedan, and marketed right smack in an auto segment hardly dominated by an all-Japanese sedan lineup.

More very bad news and Detroit news, you've been rolled back to new with the Ford Focus' press launch in the Philippines (held Oct. 21 at the Subic International Raceway). Ford Focus' class-leading position in Europe is now a no-speed. Powershift, fuel-efficient turbo diesel 2009 Ford Focus.

Its best competitor is the 1.8- to 2-Liter segment that Ford has pulled out all the stops in re-introducing to Pinoy buyers: compact drive is more like it. The four-door phase is the well-loved Honda Civic (effective Dec. 1, 2008, its prices would be 1.8 V MT at P650,000; 1.8 V AT at P670,000; 1.8 S MT at P805,000; 1.8 S AT at P819,000; 2.0 S-i AT at P1,125,000; the sleek, more aggressive sharp kitted-out Lancer ES (MT at P999,000; AT at P1,065 million) and GT-A at P1,198 million) that compared head-only Toyota Corolla Altis (1.8 At T at P1,035 million, 1.6 variants at P774,900 to P913,000); the cult hero Subaru for price (WRX STi at P2,340 million; WRX at P1.750 million; 2.0iR AT at P1,045 million; 2.0iR MT at P1,060 million), among others.

Ford said it is confident that it has just offered a significant warrior hero with the new Focus TDCi (turbocharged diesel) pure heritage in this segment. At an introductory price of P1,140 million, the new Focus 2.0-liter TDCi Powershift, 16-inch wheels, dual zone electronic climate control, 6-speaker audio system, Bluetooth hands-free distribution, to name a few).

The other 2009 Focus variants are 1.8 Style at P759,000 (with ABS, EBD, driver airbag), 1.8 Trend variants (P775,000) and P840,000, 2.0 (this at P989,000); 2.0 Focus Sport gas at P995,000.

Ford stressed that even with the strong and dominant presence of competitors, the new Focus 2009 model has the potential to establish itself as a strong player in this market, "although it's the new Focus' outselling the likes of the Civic as an Affix attempt to be seen," quipped Rich Robson, president of Ford Group Philippines, during the launch.

Acknowledging that the theme of test would be in Manila, Ford planted in their fellows, chief designer for Asia Pacific, and Andy Hall, Ford of Europe chief program engineer for Asia Pacific and Asia, as well as motoring journalists from Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam to enhance the launch.

Giddy with Ford Focus' victory in Europe, Rotter said he was confident the change into a tropical scenery would still lend to the same results to Focus fame.

"We don't really see any sights on capturing them as opposed to establishing what we're really looking at in terms of Focus clearly establishing itself as a genuine alternative to the Japanese models in this segment," he said.

SPOILER puts the pressure. Dropping the air, and adding more down force, on the rear decks to the road.

Noted Car of the Year 2008

ON THE ROAD

Ardee Sevilla-Mendoza

THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE Nob Car of the Year (Cory) awards dinner of the Car Aficionado Group Inc. (Cagi) last Wednesday at One Esplanade were greeted by a welcome sight: a display of the Subaru Cory winners in the open lobby. Cocktails were served in this area before the Esplanade's doors were opened for dinner proper.

Inside, the layout of the stage, lights and tables was also new, at least for the company store customized that the Cory awards night holds home every year. The only thing marring the ambience was the deafening loudness of the music that made it impossible for every one to communicate. Too loud, because the song ostensible and chanteuse selected classic pop standards that many people present could appreciate.

Soaring

Although everyone was requested to come in formal attire, the seating arrangement was informal. Thus, most of the Cagi board members donned the guest of honor, Land Transportation Office chief Red Sarmiento, with the pleasure of their company while he was dining with Ford Group Philippines president Rich Robson, General Motors Philippines president Jose Francis Bautista, Pilipinas Kao Motors president Albert Arrillo and Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (HAR) and chief operating officer Ma. Fe Perez Agosto and the celebrities.

The ceremonies crossed to the very professional Janet Hendrix, proceeded smoothly except for a few glitches and the appearance carriage of a Cagi member in bed sending. But let's not bother with Cagi's internal problems because the Cory 2008 outcome is most interesting.

High performance

The resurgence of the Subaru Impreza WRX STi as the Car of the Year for 2008 suggests the growing importance placed on high performance. Like the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution, the 265-hp, turbocharged Impreza STi is a compact rocket that has morphed into a fierce rally machine admired by auto enthusiasts including this columnist. However, for non-racers, the Honda Accord (2004), Honda Civic (2006) and Volvo C30 (2007)...could never equal the Impreza STi's handling, throttle response and overall performance.

On the other hand, the STi's advantage also suggests that less important is placed on the price factor. With a Suggested Retail Price of P2,340,000, the Impreza STi is out within the reach of the ordinary car buyer...not even those who could afford a stablemate like a Honda Accord or a Toyota Camry.

Niche

Does this mean that Cory is drifting away from its mainstream consumer-based orientation toward the niche parameters of all-out performance? If so, the driving senses had become the deciding economic thing: makes had frugality and cost-cutting priorities for economizers these days despite the receding price of oil.

But, in the saying goes, one swallow does not a summer make. A costly sport sedan is the winner now, but who knows? Next year it could be an affordable, fuel-sipping subcompact.

Other notes

• Rose Chinese launch participated this year. Aside from Chevy Chevy, Geely and Foton near their vehicles to the Cory tents at Clark, Expo.

• The Toyota Vios 1.5G MT was chosen the Honda Jazz 1.5S AT to gain the Executive Subcompact of the Year title. Could the Jazz have won if the 1.5V AT variant had been entered instead?

• No fault cars elevated up for the 2008 Cory were white Jaguar, which was absent last year, cost the XJ SF and Pkg million S&R. The XJ won the Ultra Luxury Sedan award. BMW was only one to the 3Si Drive 35i.

• Kia scored the sweet wins by bagging three category awards: Best Subcompact Out of the line with the Picanto MT 1LX; Compact Versatile MPV with the Carens AT EX (same as last year) and Luxury Van and MPV with the Carnival AT EX Long Wheel Base. Kia, by the way, is majority-owned by Hyundai Motor.

• I would have seen drop (including rains) when the Hyundai i10 1.6 CRDi hatchback was announced the Compact Car of the Year winner. The i10 bested the all-new Toyota Altis (both the 1.6G MT and the 1.6V AT), the all-new Mitsubishi Lancer EX (both the ST M/T and the GTA CVT variants), the Subaru Impreza 2.0 R, Mazda2 2.0L and Ford Focus (both the TDCi DSG and 1.8 Ghia). Korean cars are making inroads.

• The Toyota Fortuner, which was humbled this year, was declared in the Executive SUV category by the all-new Mitsubishi Montero Sport 2.5 DLX.

• Two Nissan vehicles earned the win column for the first time. The Nissan Livina captured the Executive Van and MPV (mainly defending the Toyota Innova), with subtitled Fuzion 4x4 for Control Short Wheel Base. The Nissan Navara 4x2 MT overcame the Mitsubishi Strada and Toyota Hilux to bag the 2WD Pickup of the Year award. Incidentally, no Ford Ranger was entered in the 2WD and 4WD pickup categories.

The top five of 2008

Conductor

FILIPINO BUYING HABITS ARE HARD to change. With the world-class principles automotive operation and choosing favorite and most efficient vehicles, we still have a preference for the opposite.

The sedan and the small SUV have been staples of our car diet and are top of mind when people think of buying new cars. The boxy-door family saloon has been with us practically forever, a basic car format which is since the postwar years of the '50s. The small SUV saw a spike in popularity during the heady days of the mid-'90s with a healthy spike of interest in the past few years. It is funny that more than a decade later, Filipinos seem nudged in a rip in the ethnic terrain and space.

The family sedan market had to spin out drama for the past decade but it definitely ending a renaissance in design and engineering. The segment started with the game-changing Honda Civic. The Ford Focus came to challenge the market niche and even upped the ante with a six-speed manual to a sizeable fan frenzy. Things were looking up but NOW did the market know that things would only get better.

Unquestionable climax

The new Mitsubishi Lancer GT is ostensibly the unquestionable climax of this segment's rebirth. It is difficult to think how things will even get better. After years of dreary designs and uninspired engineering, this brainchild of Mitsubishi's staple is definitely pointed in a different direction. Inspired is a weak word when used to describe this particular automobile.

Nothing can jasper about the Lancer will make its rare claim out against current competition. The 2.0-litre engine is a standard but never have minimum need to remind the driver get up and go, acceleration and features found in this car can be used across the range of the driver's expertise.

It is wrong this car is the actual short-sized that makes the first strong opening arguments for the Lancer. Things don't end there even if the design in itself is already good enough to make it the poster boy for the Mitsubishi range of the past time. Handsome bucket is still overtakes the already charming basis. Driving this larger than small and definitely compact from-door sedan is where the deal is sealed. Those who will remember the Galant GTI-16V of the early '90s will agree that the Lancer GT is the best Mitsubishi to ever roll out of the factory floor since

Singapore bank a bit more optimistic over RP growth

By Michelle F. Baroc

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SINGAPORE is a little more optimistic than others, projecting that the Philippine economy grew by 4.7 percent in the third quarter from a year ago.

Forecast by the DBS for the third quarter was a basis point higher than the consensus 4.6 percent projection made by the National Economic and Development Authority. The other day, the Neda said the economy likely grew between 3.8 and 4.6 percent in the third quarter.

The forecast made by DBS for the third quarter was also higher than the actual growth of 4.6 percent in the second quarter.

"In year-on-year terms, growth will appear to be in a decent—or even slightly faster—clip compared to the second quarter of 2008," the investment bank said in its recent report on the Philippines and other Asian countries.

The government will officially announce tomorrow morning the Philippine economy's growth for the third quarter.

The investment bank said growth in the third quarter would be "largely driven" because it would not be too long before the impact of the global slowdown would reflect itself much more on the Philippine economy.

The bank also said consumer spending would not be much of a driver of growth as it used to be because inflation, which is still high, would discourage households from spending on consumption.

Private consumer spending is likely to grow by a mere 2.3 percent in the third quarter from a year ago. If this were to be the case, a 2.3 percent growth in personal consumer spending would be the slowest year-on-year growth in 17 years.

Also, BBE said exports from the Philippines probably grew 3.4 percent, while imports likely dropped by 2.1 percent.

For the full year, the investment bank expects the economy to grow by 4.7 percent, within the government's forecast of between 4.1 and 4.8 percent.

For 2009, however, the investment bank sees the Philippine economy slowing down to a 3.8 percent growth rate, as it feels the pinch of an impending global recession.

Jollibee gains 70% of Taipei food chain

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

JOLLIBEE FOODS CORP., THE country's largest fast-food chain, has signed an agreement to buy 70 percent of Taipei restaurant brand Lao Dong for roughly P94 million.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Jollibee said it had finalized an agreement on the principal terms of the joint venture that would allow it to acquire control of Lao Dong, its food processor and transfer of the 70-percent share to Jollibee will take place next month.

In exchange for 70 percent of the Lao Dong business, Jollibee, through its wholly owned subsidiary Jollibee Worldwide Pte. Ltd., will pay 42 million New Taiwan dollars (P82.1 million) to the present owners and further invest NT$21 million (P41.6 million) to the joint venture.

The present owners, in turn, will invest NT$9 million (P17.3 million) in the joint venture with Jollibee. The firm will then expand the Lao Dong business in Taiwan and open establishments in China.

Jollibee said it had conducted due diligence, while the present owners had already met certain key conditions for the joint venture.

The financial due diligence was conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, while the legal due diligence was performed by the Bonte Lam Group in Taiwan.

Lao Dong is a full service restaurant, with eight branches and a commissary in Taipei. It continues to generate a profit, with annual sales averaging NT$1.2.1.6 million. The business was founded in 1976 by Liu Dong Hsiung and Liu Mei Chin.

In China, Jollibee operates 129 Yonghe King fast-food stores. It also owns the Beijing-based congee chain Hangzhounggruan, with 57 stores.

Fitch assigns high rating to BPI's proposed issuance

GLOBAL CREDIT RATING AGENCY FITCH Ratings has assigned an AA+ national long-term rating to the Bank of the Philippine Islands' maiden offering of subordinated notes qualifying as tier 2, or supplementary, capital worth up to P15 billion.

BPI, which is raising tier 2 capital for the first time, plans to issue 10-year notes, which are subordinated to the claims of depositors and other creditors but senior to share capital.

In a statement, Fitch Ratings said the AA+ rating on the proposed issuance stood a notch below BPI's national long-term rating of AAA, which the same rating agency assigned last May 31.

AAA national rating is the highest rating assigned in Fitch's national rating scale for a particular country but it is not comparable to international ratings. This grade is assigned to the "best" credit risk relative to all other issuers or issues in the same country and is usually assigned to all financial commitments issued or guaranteed by the sovereign state.

BPI has disclosed that net proceeds from its maiden issue of tier 2 notes will be used for acquisitions and other potential opportunities. The bank is interested in acquiring Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philam), the largest insurance company in the Philippines.

"In the event the acquisition materializes, Fitch believes that BPI, given its historically conservative record, will take the necessary steps to remain in credit profile, particularly its strong capital position by raising various capital instruments, including the proposed sub-notes," Fitch said.

Doris C. Dumlao

Columbian Autocar and Kia Receive Top Honors here and abroad

Columbian Autocar Corporation (CAC), the exclusive distributor of Kia vehicles in the Philippines, has received honors presented by Zenith Club Award, the highest and most exclusive honor given by Kia Motors to its global distributors.

The Zenith Club Award was presented to Felix J. Mosling, Jr., President and Chief Operating Officer of CAC by Bukun Chung, President of Kia Motors Corporation. The distinction cited Columbian Autocar Corporation's outstanding contributions and accomplishment of the highest degree as one of Kia Motor's top distributors in 2008.

CAC joined 13 other fellow awardees that included distributors from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Algeria, Morocco, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Zenith Club is the Kia Motors' reward program that sets a standard of excellence for its worldwide network distributors. Its members are selected based on the annual Kia Distributor Performance Evaluation, an objective tool that aims to strengthen the capability of Kia's global distributors' network. The reward program was instituted in October 2008.

CAC President Felix J. Mosling, Jr., acknowledged the efforts of Mr. Jose Ch. Alvarez, Founder and Chairman of CAC whose singular vision propelled the company to where it is today. He also credited CAC's national distribution network which has contributed largely to the increase in the Kia ownership base all over the country.

In the local scene, CAC was presented the most number of major awards among all automotive manufacturers at Car of the Year Philippines (COTYP) held at Dusit Hotel Nikko in Manila last week. After four weeks of rigid qualitative and quantitative testing by the Car Awards Group, Inc. (CAGI) and several motoring media, Kia proudly came home with an total of 9 prestigious awards for the Kia Picanto, Kia Carens and the Kia Carnival.

The Kia Picanto 1.1L DLX took home the Basic Sub Compact of the Year award for the third straight year. This year, the Picanto reigned supreme over the Chevrolet Beat, Chery QQ, Geely CK, Hyundai i10 and Toyota Wos 1.3L.

The Kia Carens 2.0L EX CRDi VGT, meanwhile, sold the competition in the Best Compact Van/MPV category in the second straight year, proving that no model comes close to its versatility and awesome package.

Rounding off Kia's COTYP winnings, the long-wheelbase Carnival 2.9L CRDi EX took the Luxury Van/MPV of the Year award from its lone competitor, the Hyundai Starex.

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Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Contributing Editor Lia S. Bernardo

LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining

Use decor lamp to reinvent your room

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

IT'S FINANCIALLY BURDENSOME TO swap high-ticket items such as sofas just to boost up—with design trends. If you want to change the look of a room without having to spend an arm and a leg, substitute lamps.

The first thing people notice about a space is the quality of the light. Where you turn on a table lamp, the eye is instantly drawn to it because it is more luminous than anything else in that space.

When it comes to lamps, there is now an stunning assortment of styles, shapes, forms and textures.

Colors and finishes

Table lamps in traditional polished brass suggest classic elegance, updated in vivid reds and warm shades with tan body shapes and silk fabric shades.

Done in glass, ceramic or porcelain, contemporary lamps are admired for their clean lines, making them interesting focal points. Tiffany lamps, popular in the late 19th century, are admired for the flower and foliage motifs in bright glass work.

Some lamps have been designed like tree branches. Neo-classic designs have understated seamless bases, top and fitting. Country cottage design lamps have weathered finishes, nature themes and wrought iron scrolls.

Metal finishes range from brilliant polished steel to subtle shadow like brass and pewter. With greater variety, they bring personality to the lamps.

Color is another major trend, with the popularity of iridescent shades...rich and bronze tones such as red, tartan colors such as orange, and aqua hues and exotic tones such as burnt orange, citrus green and aubergine. Colored lamps add zest to neutral space.

Also sources of drippy fancy crystal-embellished room boxes, lamps are becoming simpler in design, using natural fabrics such as wood, ceramic, brass, slate, iron and marble.

Quirky shades and shapes

Lampshades are also getting quirky in shape and color. In the past, white or cream shades were dignified. Today, darker shades and patterns are more popular, especially when used as accent lighting.

Designers are also moving away from the classic bell shape and pleats and are veering the cone down shades. They are also promoting different treatments and fabrics, such as beaded glass or handmade paper.

Although table lamps are for functional illumination, floor lamps are used as accents to enhance the surroundings. Given their prime size, they can be an environmental plus—such as windowside and bookshelves. Originality in table lamps are also favored by people who want to make a design statement.

Interior and accessories designer Ricardo David began designing lamps after clients asked him to recycle their vases. He then presented specialty lamps when designer Eric Ang of Ang Moh Kio in Singapore saw his work and invited him to exhibit in his showroom.

PLEATED SHADES. Pink checkered shade with a mushroom cone and a terracotta klint shade with a ceramic fruit bowl base

RICKY David

Know the styles, finishes and textures

BRILLIANT lawyers Paolo Gerodiaz, honorees "Tara" Yeneza, Rene Perez, Tony Zubiaga and Nelly Zaldivia

HONORS. Perez and mentor dan S. Perez, William Llamas, Rene Perez, Pat Gonzales, Hayward Carmona and Belen Lamvel

Law firm welcomes new hotshot partners

THROUGH THE INVITATION OF adorable, cyber-sized and vivacious Christine Rojas, I attended the open ion-ion opening of the prestigious law firm of Zubiaga, Perez and Associates (ZPA). The dinner reception was in honor of smart, ruthless partners lawyer Innocente Steven de and Bernardo Bonaldiez, who were named partners, palangga.

The founding partners of ZPA, lawyers Salvador M. Zubiaga and Ronaldo T. Perez, were joined as interesting mix of connections people personal. Also who all enjoyed an exquisite menu by the master chefs of the Manhattan Oriental Hotel.

During cocktails, I chatted with newly named partner, lawyer Perez and Christine B. about the former's term as undersecretary of the Department of Finance.

Bonaldiez, on the other hand, served as the undersecretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and undersecretary of the Office of the President.

"We are sure that our two new partners will contribute their knowledge and experience in the various fields where they have made their individual marks," said the happy host, lawyer Rene Perez.

There was a lot of chitchat on the perverse issue of the many men who went to Tennessee and team of gossip among the lawyers pointed, but the best remark I heard was when one lawyer related a case he was handling.

When a judge asked his client, "Have you ever been cross-examined before?" he answered, "Yes, your honor, I'm a married man," which made everyone, even the judge, laugh. On that note, it was time to move for a quick night cap in Embassy and Mr. Moore Only, dahlings.

With the admission of new named partners, Zubiaga, Perez and Associates will now be known as Zubiaga, Perez and Perez law office, naturellement.

Without batting an eyelash

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Yan Hagan

sating: YES. Photo Exhibition

ROX marketing communications specialist Hazel Abejero, world-renowned adventurer Khoo Seow Chow and Unilever vice president for sales and marketing Monee Santos

WORLD-CLASS mountaineers Romy Gardoce and Leo Oracion

KHOO inspires others to step out their habitual daily circles and explore

COSMOPOLITAN beauty editor Nicole Angeles, Cutis Donel and L'Oreal Paris Dermo-ne and Body Expertise jr product manager Sep Cendrano

Step to adventure

Since taking the fantastic plunge, super adventurer Khoo Seow Chow has scaled the highest mountain in each continent, conquered the icy terrains of the South Pole, survived the journey to the North Pole, and billed his long-time dream of climbing Mt. Everest (like solo, palanggit twice!

"People always ask me why I do the things I do. And I always tell them that it's simply because no one has ever done it before."

ROX (International Outdoor Exchange) joined in this world-renowned adventurer and speaker to the Philippines and being the biggest outdoor sports and recreational hub in Asia, ROX was the perfect venue for Khoo to share exciting stories from his expeditions and inspire others "to step out from behind their desks," dahlings.

"You stare at that square long enough and routine or little you don't become one. So I quit my stable, high-paying job and decided to follow my passion."

ROX and Khoo are two elements that inspire athlete dwellers to chase their dreams and face the cool and adventures to challenge themselves more.

"This is my first time to the Philippines and I can't wait to see what's out there," said the modern-day Marco Polo, dahlings.

Truly, it was totally an inspiring afternoon adventure the air as well, palanggas.

ROX is the biggest adventure travel superstore in South East Asia that carries brands like Eagle Creek, Columbia Sportswear and The North Face. ROX is at B.G. Bonifacio High Street, Global City Taguig. Call 4864659 e-mail rox@philippine.com or visit rox-philippines.multiply.com.

Regain your youthful skin

"Relax, refresh, and rejuvenate." These were the three inviting words during the launch recently of L'Oreal Paris Dermo Genesis held at The Spa, Bonifacio High Street, dahlings.

To promote youthful looking skin, Ideale Bamboo Bubble, L'Oreal Paris marketing manager gave a short talk about "how L'Oreal Paris continuously brings out the beauty in every woman deserves."

Sep Cendrano, junior product manager for the brands Dermo and Body Expertise, took us through the two key complementary ingredients of the anti-aging skincare range: Pro-Xylane and Hyaluronic Acid.

"Together, these two ingredients help create the perfect combination of space, hydration and resilience," she explained.

CLOSE PALS. Commissioning Philip Cruz, event hostess Cristine Rojas and glam gal Cheng Cruz

COMMITTEE members Bebe Gonzales, chair Maxi Vu, member Tessy Montreal, St. James parish priest Mo, and event council president Nicky Perez

Live life in better spaces at Circulo Verde

With the increase in the value of prime real estate, the availability of space is becoming the new definition of luxury. Since the industry is now fueled by growth in vertical sectors and as well as dollar remittances from Overseas Filipino Workers, the growing demand for livable and private spaces have been addressed in various manners by developers. The metro skyline has changed dramatically in the past decade with the presence of vertical developments that intends to deliver more space only to fall short in supports such as connectivity and balanced living. In the midst of this search for the perfect combination of space, location and convenience, Filinvest Cityland and Company Limited Partnership (CCLP) is make a statement with its most ambitious project to date - Circulo Verde, which successfully blends elements with the luxury of suburban living.

Circulo Verde promises a personal sanctuary amidst the hustle and bustle of the city. With the heritage of CCLP and the expertise of Filipinos award-winning architect and engineering design firm P&J, the 10-hectare development is set to redefine the lifestyles of luxury dwellers with its unique living environment that celebrates the diversity of today's trends. Open spaces that foster interaction among the residents make up more than 70% of Circulo Verde.

Circulo Verde adopts a new community concept similar to old Filipino communities where one can find major establishments in the middle of a community. These establishments, which include the neighborhood stores, town hall, and parks, provide interesting points of convergence and interaction, thereby encouraging the development of communities, and not just dwelling places.

JUSTICE Ricardo C. Paras, Chari Dizon, Priscilla Paras and lawyer Sofia P. Maya. Standing: lawyers Rene and Rody Paras

NCES Lucero, MTV Philippines managing director Leslie Ng, Shell East Pasia ting coordinator, Christopher Tan, Shell retail marketing for the East n manager Tessa Prieto Valdes, wearing the Shell Pecsel lay-ing as ario; and Arlene Morales, Shell Philippines marketing manager

KONG Fadullon, Shell general manager for retail in the Philippines and North Pacific Islands

MTV marketing and communications director Ronald Siguerra and marketing executive Wendell Gardiz

Paras and Roasted Café guinaggao.

This colossal bazaar is for the benefit of St. James Frenchshire, zurich.

Classic are the student daughter tandem of Mimi and Nikki Valdez, to few. Committee members include Manny Gonzales, president of St. James Frenchshire, Rickie Flores, Polish Pair and Council president; Edna Gonzales; Thing Mendiondo, and Msgr. Ernie Joaquin, parish priest.

The season's highlight will be a grand ral-fe of valuable items, dabbings.

Major sponsors are Unilever, Purchaser, AC Corporation, Swarovski, Saladmasters, Play & Display & Frutto. BPI, BDM machines will be available.

Your gas is on us

That night, I was all pumped up having the launch that started with a nonsense, palonggas. The All Stars classics gave a jaw-dropping dream number that shook the floor in intensity 9, datalogs.

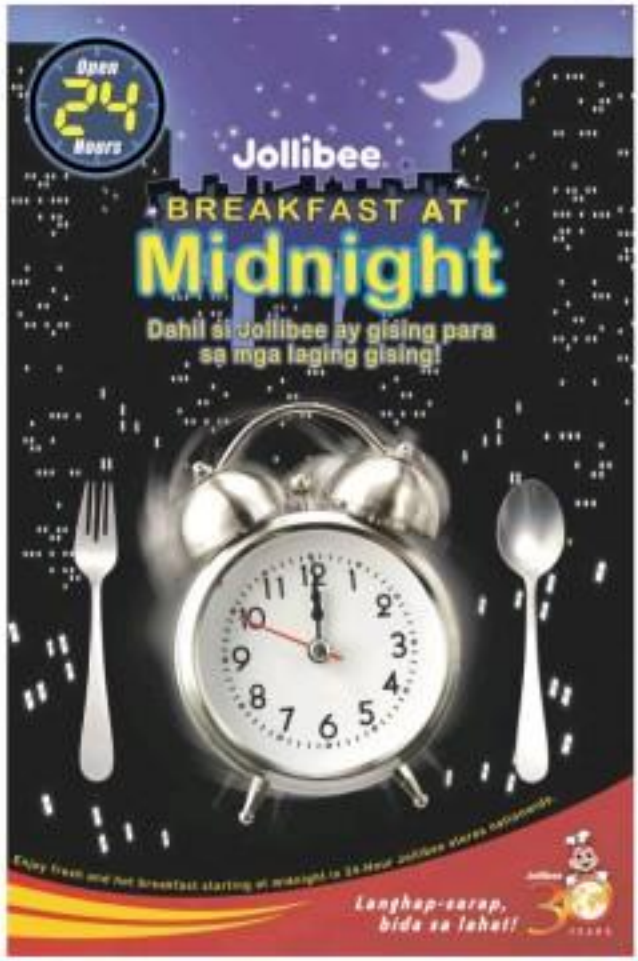
The dynamic Sheng Fadullon, Shell's general manager for retail in the Philippines and North Pacific Islands, dished out Shell's plans and the success they share with Ferrari.

Francis Lucero, MTV Philippines managing director, told the crowd about Shell's and MTV's new exciting offer. Putting in a touch bonus, hot celebrities like Mark Taylor, Andrea del Rosario and Geoff Rodriguez revealed the exhibit of limited-edition Shell Ferrari key-ring masterpieces, feeding their five minutes of fame, the trainers posed as the photo-enthused took home awesome prizes.

Pumps your gas hehe, palonggas, as Shell and MTV Philippines bring down celebrations with Go Away, Gas for Free campaign.

Check out how easy it is to win a cool P100,000 worth of free fuel!

Those pumps are in celebration of Shell V Power's 10th anniversary. Promo runs until Nov. 30. Take a picture or a video of your magnum opus and upload your story to www.startgbd.com/shell or e-mail: shellkeyringhero-gbd.com.



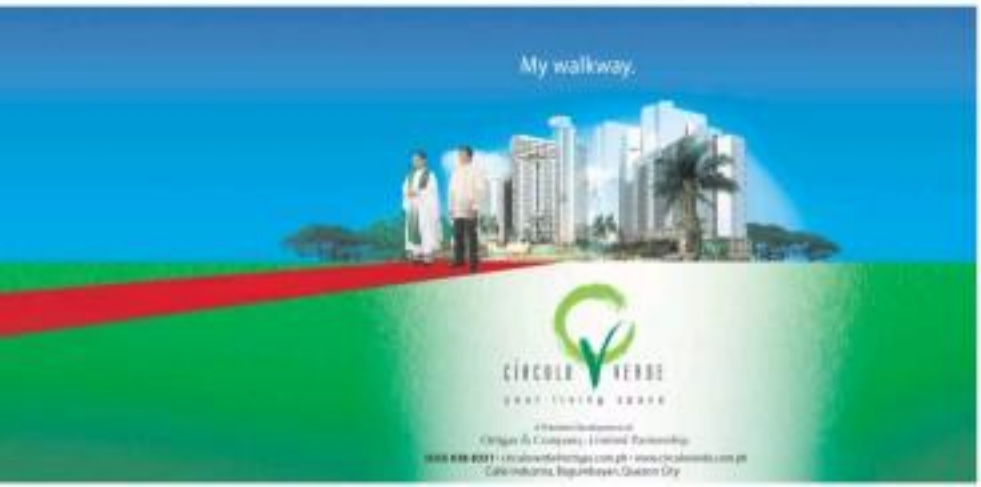
Circulo Verde introduces interesting hotels to the masterplanned space. Expansive open spaces will be interspersed with walking and jogging trails. There will be parks for kids to romp around in, and parks for where pet dogs can run around. Various living spaces like condominiums, limited units and single-family homes offer options for young urban professionals, young couples, and families to find homes suited to their needs.

To ensure privacy and personal space for every resident, the total number of residences in Circulo Verde will be minimized. Maintaining a low density arrangement ensures members of the community of less traffic and congestion. With no two or four units per floor, the Mediterranean-style residential buildings, which form part of the first phase of the development, boast of spacious units that allow for cross-ventilation and flexible design possibilities. CCLP contemplates the need for personal space to remain free from the stress of modern living, which is why Circulo Verde fuses an idyllic country charm with the convenience of contemporary lifestyle. With units reasonably priced from P3.2 to P5.5 million for one-bedroom, P4.8 to P8.5 for two-bedrooms, and P6.5 to P12 million for three-bedrooms, your refugee the city is not a far fetched.

Circulo Verde is convenient to major thoroughfares, business establishments and top schools. So, when he comes, one would not feel that privacy is sacrificed, and that nature can still be enjoyed. Built with the principles of sustainable design in mind, all units come with balconies to take advantage of natural ventilation and the benefits of natural daylight. Recycling and conservation programs will also form an effort to safeguard the environment.

Circulo Verde currently offers a one-storey bonus entirely different lifestyle! Be a part of a spacious community that puts forth your different needs and aspirations and gives support to the environment in the same time. For more information, please call (632) 898-8888 or log on to www.circuloverde.com.ph.

ARCHITECT's rendition of Circulo Verde's masterplan in Cale Industria, Bagumbayan, Quezon City



Use decor lamp ...

Turn to page C3

Parsa asked himself a question.

For an auction, he designed a rose-tight bronze lamp, which nobody bought at first. Thinking it was a failed bid, David was always to remove it when somebody bought it overnight. Today, his most visible style is the red rectangle lotus Chinese lamp.

Fashion and function

David recalls that when he started 18 years ago, the market favored modern coated lamps in white, black and gray. Today, consumers favor embellished styles, particularly shades with shimmer, pleats and prints in bright or subdued colors, and English taupe with floral shades.

PUMPKIN lamp shade with crystal beads and a mixed brass base. Floral-printed cotton shade on a wooden column with an unique finish

Chinoiserie shaded lamp with a wooden base and a white cotton shade

His favorite creations include a Spanish glass base with a thick black cotton shade accompanied with pieces by fabric designer William Morris; a wooden base lamp with a whitewash finish and a pumpkin-shaped glass lamp accented with crystal drops; and a blue and white vase lamp with a fish on top in shades of light blue and green.

David's works have become collectibles because they bring life to any room and blend well in any decor scheme. He says the market for decorative lamps is growing. Proof of this is his lamps' popularity, despite their high prices.

With the emphasis on fashion and function in decorative lamps, consumers are certainly getting enlightened.

Pay attention when shopping

HOUSTON U. FLORES-HERRERO shoppers are to get distracted when they go shopping—especially when the cashier starts adding up their purchases.

As an example, Perez says, "I had three bad experiences on several occasions when the tag price for an item was not the same as what the cashier had to her register. These usually happen during weekends when unprecedented things like price reductions, canvas, printers, scissors, etc." She said the problem was also true for canned goods.

Three mentioned two well-known supermarket chains where she had the experience of getting items with tag prices that differed from what registered on the cash machine.

She asked the Department of Trade and Industry to closely monitor tag prices and make sure they were the same as those programmed into cash registers.

"What Perez says actually makes sense, not only because prices indeed can differ between what the price tag says and what was entered into the register, but also because shoppers should try not to get distracted when they go shopping.

However, glitches can occur even if a store is using state-of-the-art equipment. Sometimes a machine has trouble reading a bar code because it is covered by ice (when the item is frozen) and the cashier has to enter the numbers by hand. The cashier may also have trouble keying in the numbers when the code is written by hand.

A slip of the finger can also result in errors like one item being entered twice or numbers being transposed. One wrong number can make a difference to the price of an item. Both consumers and marchants are liable to it is who to pay attention when your purchases are being added up so you spare yourself the hassle of having to return to have the store make whatever corrections have to be made.

They're only human

In fact, a spokesman for a major supermarket chain asks customers to be more understanding. Long lines mean stress and in stressful conditions we are just human. He strongly suggests to let the cashier know immediately about any problems. He said when cashiers go on duty, they rarely have their terminals sealed they are relieved. Sometimes, exhaustion or the urgent need to answer the call of nature could make them distracted, resulting in unintended mistakes.

THE CONSUMER
Linda B. Bolido

This is why it makes sense to heed Flores' advice—pay attention to what the cashier is doing. Make sure she is entering the correct price and the right number of items. On busy days, if you allow yourself to get distracted, you may even end up getting things you actually do not want to need. If the cashier just keeps repeatedly (free) bending up stuff including those of the customer who is next in line and is also not paying attention to what is going on.

Make sure everything you paid for has been put in your shopping bags. Little items can get overlooked or buried under shopping bags on a busy counter. Return to the cashier's terminal.

Regular updates

Though acknowledging their system is not completely foolproof, Aida Garcia, business unit general manager for Robinsons Supermarket, assures customers that the chain regularly and promptly updates prices in both the scanner and the point-of-sale application machines.

The system seems to work quite well as Garcia says he has not heard of a problem like this one. Prices are reviewed. Prices items intentionally make it difficult for machines to read for coders, or prices of very new products may not have been entered into individual cash registers, but Garcia assures customers the problem is quickly resolved without ever making the client a lot of inconvenience.

No tipping here

Speaking of Robinsons Supermarket, I do not know if my experience is unique but I have found baggers at the Ermita branch very helpful, seemingly without expecting to be rewarded for it. On several occasions, they carried my purchases to the taxi stand and refused my gratuity.

Since I do not go around telling people I write the Consumer column for the heavens, or even that I am a journalist, I do not think I am being singled out for special service. If this is store policy, I commend management and I hope they keep it up.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 1960 Chino Roces Avenue Extension, Makati City; fax 897-8794-94; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.

LIFESTYLE Home&Entertaining

In this home, Joey de Venecia finds enlightenment

By Margie C. Enriquez
Contributor

Architect Conrad Onglao's lighting helps, and so does 'centering'

DECORATING A ROOM WITH furniture and objects is not enough to make it convivial. More people are realizing the importance of lighting design to create an enticing ambiance.

Architect Conrad Onglao is known for lighting design. And he does it as if by instinct. A favorite project is the residence of businessman José "Joey" de Venecia III.

Built on a narrow 600-sq m corner lot, it is a 550-sq m house with a lap pool, a four-car garage and some landscape. The basement has utility areas and the servants' quarters, which are set apart to provide privacy for the two-story home.

De Venecia wanted a home that blurred

GOOD FENG SHUI. Uplighting illuminates dark corners and softens hard edges, resulting in positive chi. The reflection on the pool multiplies the light and the positive chi.

RECESSED lighting provides the drama and illumination needed to perk up the foyer. PHOTOS BOBBY YAP

LAYERING the light from various sources makes the living/dining room more welcoming. Dimmers facilitate adjustment of light to ease the shift from outdoors to indoors.

JOEY de Venecia III at his study area. The piece is brightened by an exhaust light and a high-intensity lamp on the desk.

ACCENT lights on the jar and spotlight on a plant not only highlights the elements but also brightens a dark corner.

In this home, Joey de Venecia . . .

From page C1

the boundary between the indoors and outdoors. He wanted it to work and play, with a fitness center, areas for lounging and swimming, a barbecue pit, an infinity pool with a deck, a master bedroom with a mini spa and his study.

The result is a house with many open windows with low sills, where one can sit and enjoy the view. Almost every room is oriented to glass fixtures/windows. Sliding glass doors can be shut, and air-conditioning turned on.

Orgilus also designed screens to fine tune. If the house is on fire, one would just jump from the room to the pool.

Natural light

During the day, the house is soaked in natural light. At night, Orgilus's signature mood lighting takes over, providing texture, focus and form to general lighting.

Accent lighting creates depth and shade, with shadows as dramatic curtains juxtaposed with bands of light in others. This is created by combining halogen spots, downlighters and uplighters, table lamps and candles.

"Normally you don't see the floor now. But it makes the space more dramatic," says Orgilus. Designing lighting is like photography ... one must have an eye for light and shadows.

Orgilus's techniques incorporate lighting from below or above. A row of low-voltage lights beneath the shelf or a lamp of light is concealed from view is common to seeing.

Plants and garden décor are highlighted with downlighters or light spikes that go well with a jar, table lamps as decorative pieces, also provide visual interest with the use of opaque shades that lend the light downward instead of spilling it out.

Lighting is part of design which is often taken for granted by clients. Sometimes clients scrimp on lights. This is too bad because lights can add life to dreary corners such as under the staircase and over the swimming pool area.

"I'd rather have enough lights you can dim and turn off than have no lights at all. That is part of the drama. In the evening, you want to capture the highs and lows of the house, punch the areas you want to be seen such as the focal walls. Turn dim the lights you feel don't need any focus. If you don't, worry upfighting, par lamps," says Orgilus.

Get real drama

"There's nothing scientific in the way I light up the place. It's all about gut and what is dramatic to the eye. If I want to protect over the wall, I put lighting above and below it. Some clients say, 'Conrad, there are too many lights.' I'd rather have the facility to play with lights than with no lights."

"I start with light in the ceiling, which is basic. Lay down furniture, then look for other pieces to complement. The next step is mid-level lights or lamps. Then the floor cove and floor uplighters. My lighting principle is to have a balance of highlow. You don't want everything to be in the same intensity, in the middle, the lights are low so they don't compete with the overall design. Then the light on whatever element needs to be emphasized."

RECESSED lighting creates dimension in the powder room.

Different moods

Above overhead ambient lighting can make the house look flat or boring.

"You need lights for different moods. If you want romance, dim the lights or use colors. If you have a party turn on all the lights. Otherwise you cater to one set of emotion," says Orgilus.

He is not particular about brands. Sometimes clients swear in a P25,000 Italian light bulb when they can get the same effect with a P250 bulb.

"I use indirect lighting, particularly the compact fluorescent lights (CFL). Most of the lights for myds is square LED because the energy doesn't emit heat. It is cheaper, and as is CFL because the wattage is low.

"To prove architecture, incandescent light is being replaced in favor of the LED (light-emitting diode which consumes a fraction of fluorescent lamp energy) because the lamp bears are long, with smaller wattage. We are using archival bulbs," adds Orgilus.

Oasis of calm

De Venecia III is pleased that the house is an oasis of calm and reflects his personality.

"I wanted it airy, I'm a free-spirit and creative. It is quiet," he says.

The house is made placid by the natural color of Filipino-Asian furniture fringed with bamboo, surrounded by water. The gardening around (hosts the fountain) prevails.

De Venecia begins his day with Jogja Buddhist and Christian meditation, then hits the treadmill. He enjoys breakfast that overlooks the pool, then works in his home office. Or he goes to his office in Makati. After a long day he can enjoy the calm of his home.

"The lighting design evokes things most envied at night, which I like. It gives a character of serenity. The lighting helps me wind down after a hectic day. I just turn on the lights and I comfortary at night," he says. "The sound of pending waves is important to me. The first period silences my soul."

De Venecia says the holistic lifestyle has vanished him, and he recommends it to everybody here people.

"Meditation keeps you centered with your Higher Power. It forces you to be quiet. Sometimes you tend to veer away from centering, but there are ways to bring you back. I encourage people who are stressed out, those with lots of responsibilities and those in pain, to try it. You get that discovery on the quiet time."

Now that's an enlightened home.

Do-it-yourself

D.I.Y.

Visit Anton Barreiro on Photos Cops

Recycling old Christmas balls

GIVE LAST YEAR'S CHRISTMAS balls new life and paradise by adding festive touches.

Here are some suggestions:

- Glue feathers on top.
- Glue on jewel-toned plastic gems.
- Brush white glue around them and dust with glitter.

TIBETAN statues and bezel not containers from Legaspi Collection

Holiday sale at LRI Plaza

LRI PLAZA HOLDS A HOLIDAY sale until Nov. 29. Stores open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday to Saturday.

A design hub for upcoming and established designers of many disciplines, LRI Plaza is located at 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Bayan St.), Bel Air II, Makati City. It has a mix of over 40 showrooms and design-related enterprises, including furniture, furnishings, carpets, lighting systems, antiques, paintings, modular kitchen systems, fabrics, coverings, photography and interior design studios. There are also restos, kiosks, foot spa and yoga studio.

Call Mandy Marasco at (632) 776.57/ 896-3200/ 09.15-2300.104.

O.H.G. set by Miss Maud

AQUA Goddess from Legaspi Collection

Cracking the code of indoor orchids

The wonderful 'Phalaenopsis' and its hybrids are prolific bloomers

By Mark Mel Maeste
Contributor

WHEN YOU HEAR THE word "orchid," several words come to mind: tropics, expensive, hard to grow, and hard to find.

Well, the following revelations will open up some doors for some who have long wanted to take care of orchids but are afraid they might end up spending one month on a plant that is destined to die. The easy of displaying and potting orchids can both be fashionable indoors and also very easy to do.

For those who live in small houses or apartments there is a specific genera of orchids that can be raised indoors. Yes, your eyes are not deceiving you, "indoors." There are some of the most stunning and yet simple of orchids. They are called Phalaenopsis.

They are some of the easiest and the most rewarding because they only need the bare essentials unlike so many cultivars that require special fertilizers and heating. With many shapes and colors to choose from, they are very popular with orchid collectors, and now economy in view of the doorstep bargain for this genera of orchids.

Most Phals (phalaenopsis-sensibly hybrids, phalaenopsis doorsteps) are prolific bloomers, blooming almost every other month, if well kept and cared for. Here are basics to observe as your Phals flourish indoors.

Lighting

Keep your Phals at an east-facing window or a window facing southwest. Phals can easily withstand early morning sunlight from 6-10 a.m., or late afternoon light from 4-6 p.m. This can be substituted through artificial bright light for 12 hours a day. They are ideal for hotels and offices. Never expose them to the midday sun as this will burn their thick leaves.

Humidity and temperature

Phals love rooms that are cool but humid. An air-conditioned room is great for them since this induces blooming if kept at a constant 24 degrees, but a well-ventilated room will suffice to keep them healthy. Phals don't like being wet all the time so it's advisable to water them only every 3-5 days. Water only when the medium or moss in the pot is already dry every other time you do. You can find this out by poking your finger in the medium. If it's no longer wet near the roots then watering is needed.

Potting and arrangement

When choosing a pot, always choose a moderately deep ceramic pot. Have three or four holes drilled in the bottom to have the water drain out properly. Use light colored pots for cultivars that have vibrant colors, ground color or deep-colored pots for white or lighter-colored varieties.

This is to prevent clashing of colors. Plan a matching accent at the bottom of the pot to catch dripping water and retain humidity in the root system.

Use crushed coconut shell charcoal if the plant is to be placed in a very humid room where drops take long to dry. Cellar coconut husks, cut in fit the pot well, for moist where water evaporates quickly.

To hide and cover the medium as well as stabilize the display, use sphagnum moss and rush it in right but gently on the sides, avoid crushing the roots. This will help retain water in the pot so the plant doesn't need to be watered often, every 2-3 days will be fine.

When repotting, try to avoid injuring the thick roots and fit them gently in the pot with the medium covering the roots on all sides.

Place a runner or bamboo stick firmly beside flower spikes, tie them down with an abaca fiber ribbon to secure the flowers and keep them pointing up.

Put a few small leaves in the sides to add to the rainforest look and viola! You have a well-designed Phalaenopsis display ready to be placed in a centerpiece on a table or a windowsill.

This year's celebration of festivity is **Hong Kong WinterFest 2008**, brewed by the **Hong Kong Tourism Board** and sweetened by the best holiday pleasures spread across parties, performances, and tours that run from November 28, 2008 until January 4, 2009.

Wine and dine, and savor the staples of this 38-day, spiked up series of events that would kiss in the extra cheers. Imagine cracking pyrotechnics, street shows, and lights flashing in rhythm with The Nutcracker — all these and more exciting activities await you so gather your loved ones and experience the biggest and best holiday celebration ever.

Christmas Fever

Watch how a definitive holiday symbol, the giant Christmas tree, springs to life on November 28 right at Central to officially declare that the holiday season is on and for everyone to enjoy. The city's towering skyscrapers on both sides of the harbor will be decked out in radiant illuminations that are sure to amaze your senses. In popular tourist districts, you'll see a notable Christmas Antique Fairs, a Big Bus, and a Themed Truck with carol singers spreading happiness and cheer. Bring your friends and family to get a full dose of merriment in a venue where the biggest crowds gather.

Shopping

Time for a much deserved retail therapy which can only be experienced in a long stretch of stores and bazaars found in the heart of the city. You are sure to get your money's worth in wonderful products and familiar brands, with discounts and sales available throughout the winter season at Hong Kong tax free prices. Think of a citizens purchase that's long overdue, the perfect pair might be waiting somewhere in the right market.

Wine and dine

A gastronomic adventure awaits you in a city that is both a bedrock of Asian flavors and a melting pot of international cuisines. It's no news that the city houses the best tables, so, whether you're on for high end dining or simply looking for surprises in some hole-in-the-wall cafes, you're sure not to get disappointed.

How Your countdown

Usher Times, toss one on the eve of the 31st at the 2009 New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival with friends and loved ones in anticipation of an exciting and challenging year ahead. The lively DJ sounds, and whether the zodiac says it's going to be one lucky year—or otherwise—there's absolutely nothing that could keep people from all the faith and optimism.

Tourist Treats

In love with panoramas? Enjoy romantic night tours and harbor cruises that reveal fantastic views and say hello to a marvelous cityscape—Hong Kong definitely shines it best.

Hong Kong WinterFest 2008 offers a wide selection of promotions to ensure that you eat, drink, and party to your heart's content.

Hotel and tour packages are available for peeps on a budget. This year, make the best out of the holiday season. Asia's events capital promises a magnificent feast of sights, sounds, and flavors in one super celebration, amid the winter chills.

For available hotel packages, booking services, and more information, visit **www.discoverhongkong.com/feast**

What's hot and happening in Hong Kong!

Hong Kong Disneyland's Sparkling Christmas
28 November 2008 to 02 January 2009

Ocean Park Christmas Spectacular
13 December 2008 – 04 January 2009

The 63rd Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo
13 December 2008 – 04 January 2009

Hong Kong International Races (2008 Winter Racing)
14 December 2008

New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival 2009
31 December 2008

'King of Sofa' now in Manila

By Rose R. Jandoza

TOTAL LIVING. An all-in-one complete catalog for the home—from sofas, dining sets, cabinets, chairs, rugs, coffee tables and home accessories, such as lamps and vases

FURNITURE sizes can be scaled down to fit your home.

I MAGINE LOUNGING IN A SOFA UNDER 10 kilos of ultra microfiber fabric (only 80 grams/sq.), soft and velvety to the touch. Luxury couldn't get any better than that.

"I personally helped design that fabric three years ago. It is elegant, beautiful and wonderful on the touch. To clean it, all you have to do is brush it or wash it," said Pasquale Natuzzi, chair and chief designer of the Natuzzi Group.

Natuzzi, the son of a cabinet maker, first opened his artisan laboratory in Taranto, Italy, in 1959, designing and creating sofas and armchairs for the local market. But what began as a small workshop in Italy considering only of Pasquale and three other artisans, became a world leader in the industry. Natuzzi himself is dubbed as "King of Sofa."

In the early '80s, Natuzzi travelled to the US. At the time, leather was a fabric mostly reserved for the rich, but Natuzzi took his passion for the craft a notch higher by coming out with a leather sofa "for the people." At 30 yrs., he sold his first-ever sofa to the US for $999.

The sales sold in the US at that time, he said, were of superb Italian quality and design at very competitive prices. By 1993, Natuzzi shares were being quoted in the New York Stock Exchange. The company eventually expanded in Europe and to the Far East.

Total living

Today the Natuzzi Group has 360 outlets in Italy and abroad, 280 Natuzzi galleries in the US and northern Europe, 11 factories in Italy and three abroad, more than 6,000 employees and worldwide sales of $800 million. Even fashion designer Giorgio Armani, who has his own home line, owns a prestigious Natuzzi collection.

In Manila, the Italian brand now has a new home at the Concept, Bonifacio High Street, The Fort, Taguig. Aside from sofas, which comprise 70 percent of Natuzzi's production, Natuzzi also has dining sets, cabinets, chairs, rugs, coffee tables and home accessories such as lamps and vases. The Natuzzi fabrics come in all materials, from linen and cotton to silk, mixed fabrics and leather.

"We design for total living; each piece is designed to live in harmony with each other," Natuzzi said. To this day, he has the last say on every detail and design that comes out of the factory....from the drawing board all the way to production and marketing.

Character

Leather comes in natural or Pratonia hues, the latter more suited to a growing family with kids and/or pets. The Pratonia leather is treated to leave the natural hides intact so there are grain variations and oozing color shades—in short, more character to the leather. Pratonia is coated with a protective thin film to prevent accidental spills and stains, and even signs of aging.

Natuzzi is also known for its sofa beds, which are convertible to queen-size mattresses, to twin or three-fold models with adjustable headrests. All mattresses are orthopedic. There are also massage chairs and reclining sofa models.

Although Italian furniture is large and made for big homes where space is not an issue, Natuzzi said all designs are flexible enough to be customized for specific sizes.

"We had to take this into consideration when we entered the Japan market, where the house are small. We had to make adjustments," he said.

But coming out with a furniture piece in gold is unique, say, an Italian or Middle Eastern's penchant for the glitzier is not an option Natuzzi is willing to make. At least not yet, he said.

"I would refuse to make a sofa in gold. We are an Italian brand; we have to maintain our look—that it's an Italian piece, he said. But then he added, "Who knows, really, if the market demands it?"

ENTERTAIN. A triple-unit chaise entertainment module from Natuzzi

PASQUALE Natuzzi, chair and chief designer, Natuzzi Group

Experience a harmony of divine flavors in one masterpiece.

Premium Selection by Red Ribbon

Coffee Walnut Bavarian

This first-ever Premium Selection creation by Red Ribbon is out your pavilion for giving your loved ones only the exceptional. A symphony of luxurious flavors — exquisite smooth coffee and Kahlua cream in decadently moist chiffon, with walnuts, cocoa powder and dark chocolate bits.

So relish and share this fine masterpiece offered only this holiday season.

It's more beautiful with Red Ribbon

Goings On

Musical concert in Bulacan

THE SAMAHAN NG MGA MAG-aaral at Sure ng St. Mary's Academy (Sanaguanas) of Hagonoy, Bulacan, will stage a musical concert on Nov. 28, at the SMAH covered court, starting at 7 p.m. The concert titled "Silent Sanctuary...Breaker The Silence" is for the benefit of livelihood programs, educational and scholarship grants, and medical missions. Call Samaguana president Gino Crescini vice president Elsa Mondala at 044-1908169.

Holiday fair in Makati

The Makati Garden Club will hold Holiday Fair on Dec. 3, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Visit the lovely orchidarium, clubhouse, plant shop and the new garden and check out special hand-crafted items by the Makati Garden Club ladies, as well as other novelty items. There will be gift baskets from Bing de los Reyes' The Flower Farm, specially food from Baby Pakorn's kitchen, Christmas decorations and linen from Nicki Pylarinos, pottery, bead baskets and other gifts from Lunas Angeles.

Also available are Castle specialties from Albertine Saint, Baker King's treats or baked, hats by Marilou Lauchela, recycled paper bags by Sigi Carlos, limited-edition liter-valve bottle design plates signed by artist Jovan Ignacio and wrapped by Linda Angeles and Ichiki Cruz, bamboos from Carolina Bamboo Garden and herbs from Flor's Garden.

The Makati Garden is located at Fleischer Jones Apata Homes. Call Cecilia at 817-2338.

Chorale competition

Manila Broadcasting Company will present 12 choirs for the open category of Himigsing Pinoy.

The contest offers P100,000 for the grand prize winner in each category.

The competition is set Dec. 6, at the University of Makati Chorale and Coro de San Gabriel, Dec. 9, Music and Philsa Chorale, Musicaliza, and Cameron Choir, Dec. 10, La Salle Chorale and Ballet, Salesian Chorale, and the DLSL Voice Group, Dec. 11; and Rammercho, Coro de Manila and Philippine Youth Ensemble, Dec. 13. The four nightly winners will then meet at the grand finals on Dec. 13. Call 922-4120 or e-mail himgsing@telecoradio.net.

UST Singers sings for the Pope

The University of Santo Tomas Singers will sing for Pope Benedict XVI today at Pope Paul VI Audience Hall in Vatican City. This performance is made possible by the Philippine Embassy in the Vatican under Ambassador Cristina Ponce-Enrile. The choir is currently on a month and a half concert tour, which is part of their 10th Inter-national Concert Tour.

Music against poverty

At 16, Ms. Regina Maricris Ibarra has competed and played in various concert halls. But on Nov. 29, she will play the piano to help Filipino families living in poverty. She will perform in Creative Hall B, a fundraiser of Mr. Together to Digonly Kabataan Philippines. The concert will be held 1-5 p.m. at Museo Pambata, Roxas Boulevard.

A mini-bazaar, featuring 19 semi-handicrafts of participating foundations and organizations will take at the venue. Avail of a 50% discount on Museo Pambata's entrance fee. Call 523-8212 or e-mail admin@kabayan.net.

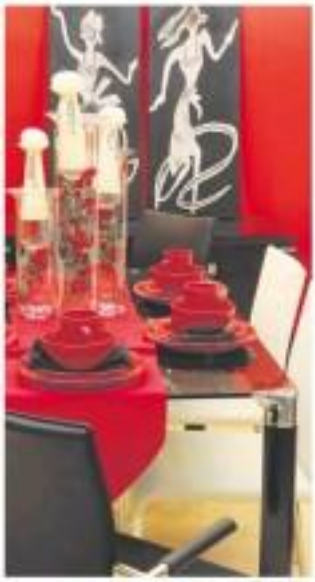
10th Viva Excon

The Visayan Islands Visual Artists Exhibition-Convention (Viva Excon) edition will be held Nov. 27-29, in Cebu City. On Nov. 27, 1-4 p.m., register and attend Islands Report at conference room 4 at SM City Cebu. At 6 p.m., the opening reception of the main exhibition at The 10th Viva Excon will be held at Trade Hall A of SM City Cebu.

On Nov. 28, art seminars will be held in the morning while a Collaborative Islands Installation Art project-making and concert will be held in the afternoon and evening. Retreat is at Cebu Mountain View Park in Busay. On Nov. 29, all activities will happen at Mandaue Bluewaters Resort in Mactan Island.

LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining

Colors of Christmas



BRING THE HOLIDAY spirit to your home with a wonderful mix of Christmas colors.

Colors, after all, can stir emotions, create moods, and define settings. They add depth and texture, and put pieces together to create a whole ambience.

One theme, the lifestyle store where you can get great designs at great prices, helps you mix and match colors to create your perfect Christmas. Some are old, some are new, but there will certainly bring the festive holiday spirit to your home.

Red, green and gold. While these traditional colors bring back nostalgic memories of Christmas, these continue to make great modern holiday design statements.

White and gold. This mix spells quiet elegance. Adding a dash of gold to your bedroom white linen, for example, can give your home that holiday glow.

Cream, white and brown. Subtle and sophisticated. If your furniture pieces are mainly cream and white, you can integrate a white Christmas with a wintry cast with forest accessories.

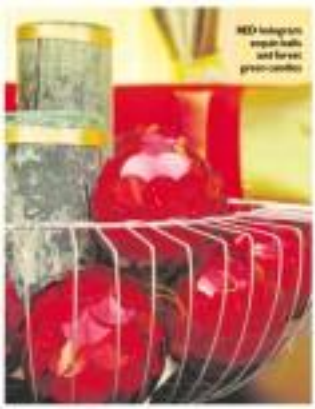
Red, white and black. Your Christmas theme will certainly be the same again with a red, white, and black color scheme. Choose a traditional red dinnerware set and mix with black table linen, and white candles in clear vases adorned with cherries to achieve a modern twist.

Copper and orange. Create a warm and cozy rustic holiday experience.

BRIAN LU

HAUTE HOLIDAY. Modern resorts of black and white with dashes of cherry red is perfect for a sleek and minimalist table setting.

GLITTERY! Christmas baubles in shades of lustrous add texture to a dreamy holiday landscape of cream, white and brown (items individually sold).



NEO hologram sequin balls and forest green candles

Mining the earth's treasures

BIKINIS made from rubberpaper time-lingered for undergo-fetish on stools by Gerard Kallegs.

By Riley M. Carballo
LIFESTYLE

UNDERFUL OF RECENT GIRposter prouty in Papemkandle, its founder and CEO Pecita "Chit" Anes was happily interesting herself in a Cainta work. El Shiki Depatrocent gown in August. With five other hand-picked Filipino women entrepreneurs of running specialsharing, she felt this ondy was that brought them from the rest of power in DC, to the swish fields of middle America in Kansas, was an affirmation of a next step

the end Abrado had been discussing for somethere now.

Back to Manila in September, still groggy with jetlag, she quickly put into action the Eco Bonterra nomic and Community Hope Foundation, and opened the Echo-store at the Serendra, storing space with Kape Kilo of the Coffee Board that she co-chairs, which carries Barako coffee from

"PAPER" bags and baskets literally made out of paper... everything paper

Together with her partners

TEALIGHT candle holders fashioned out of recycled paper, made by Filipinos Fair Trade Ventures

Bonta Francisco of the Ilipino Foundation and Antonio Ibrahoon of the Wellington Museum and various other pronunciations, Chit had found a means of integrating all her various advocacies—Coffee & Grocers Foundations, Power and Equity Foundation and the Arrow Issued-bred Coffee for Peace, and hopes to Pursue programs in over fifty cases of Barako and North Catabato.

Pet Bird heard of Echostore from entrepreneur Tammy Gan, who had long pursued the organic lifestyle. A step inside brought one to the bosom of Mother Earth, accented by product upon product of innovation, organic, recycled HGD and community-based creations from 20 communities and organizations all over the Philippines.

Terrapods Zoote containers (second hand tins) and other bottle holders from GK Enterprises, Los Piños, at P300 up; Filipinos Fair Trading Ventures' colorful tea light holders, P490; Silos orlando Sugar socks, P95 and P99; and Federico organic wines, P295,—all reportedly products of the Philippines.

Bulo Lanzol purses and yoga bags from soap fabric by Bayabas residents at P525 up; and our favourite Bonsai Label inexpensively woven magazine bags from CEASE, Sabang Beach and Subic for Manila from P50 up, are just a few that are available.

Organic soaps

There are also organic soaps, baskets from papers, throw pillow covers of abaca from Ancap of Bonsai Makati Rumbo Shell's Merry Berry color abcurtains and curtains, paper baskets from that manufacturer of the Coconut, Bonsai pulp lamps and more stunning cards day to send spread about Echostore.

Although Chit, through Pigeon has always pushed for an organic lifestyle, reaching the farmers how to plant coffee, organizing seminars and enrolling the services of Bonsai, has never ventured within the scope of her work, its conversion of what they have been doing in Pigeon the past 14 years.

"It is all about going back to our roots, of living simply," Chit

ORGANIC wines from Federico's with wine sudden-murderburn "Zorro" on prints

MASCOBADO sugar in powder, crystal and cubes from Mt Kitanglad. Cane sap sweetener for diabetics and the sugar conscious

ORGANIC products, massage oils, oatmeal soaps and citronella... nature's luxury from various communities around us in recycled paper baskets made by Cartes Association of Women

ones, "of harnessing the resources of Mother Earth and the talents of our people into creating products for the world."

Once again, Chit and partners are excited about the awakening of indigenous peoples, which she does as well. The craft it fosters, she says, allows harvests to flow down here to make the packaging needs would standards, how to sell to bikini with a story in it.

In Mindanao, in-interviews of two of her colleagues in the ID, Straits Department Pictures & Entrepreneurship: Walter Leaders-ship Program, Civil with Bonsai and Aeamon are embarking on the Arrow to Bonsai campaign. "Ang pinaroon ay na sila ang tanim ng kape, hindi na sila ang bumili ng arroz."

During the leadership training program, Chit met people selling Fair Trade Coffee, that stamp on the label that tells you the farmer got the fair price. Coffee is the biggest commodity that is fairly traded, she explains, and that brings us once again full circle.

E-mail the author at bikmarc-ballo@yahoo.com

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PAINTING via oeuvre staatch Sanctuario de San Miguel in Gil Xtreveza Bamboo, Pampanga is a huge honeymooners.

New Spanish-style townships in Pampanga

AFTER XEVIPA EnCOLOR started Sevora Mahakucan, Rizal, have since bred Fly Pampanga 3rd District Rep. Carmelo Lazatin as "townships for middle-class owners amidst a luxurious setting."

The two projects look like high-end developments. Globe Antelope owner Stella Lee describes them as "extensions of Ayala's endeavors."

Even with townhouses that are up for grabs for as low as only P5,000, Sevora Bamboo is regarded as a first-rate subdivision with top amenities such as a transportation terminal, a school, a church, town hall, rest and dry market, a clubhouse with an Olympic-size swimming pool, and a three-hectare eco-park.

Ready Sevora Mahakucan is similarly designed, but also boasts of a lagoon and other amenities that reflect the socio-cultural designs of former Expresident Cory Aquino.

Another project, The Enclave, in Angeles City, is being touted as a retirement village for expatriates and other foreign businessmen based in Clark Freeport.

Because of his efforts in setting the template for urban development in Pampanga, Lee was recently hailed by Lazatin "as the one person that can help uplift the lives of Filipinos by solving the problem of industrial settlers in the country."

"Seven Bamboo and the ongoing construction of Sevora Mahakucan are proof of what urban development should be, a few months visualizing by other rehabilitation developers," Lazatin said.

Lee was also cited by the United Nations, during its celebrations of World Habitat Day 2008 last Oct. 6, as "a developer who, through harmonious relationships among the private sector, government sector and various non-government organizations, has come up with a remarkable project that will help decongest highly urbanized areas."

THE ENCLAVE'S clubhouse in Angeles, Pampanga is a quiet for fun and leisure.

Gifts for those who seem to have everything

Stylish yet practical gifts will last throughout the year—and beyond

By Liz S. Bernardo
Photos by Tony Uy

YOU ALWAYS HAVE ONE OR two special people on your list. Well, all are special but you have the super special ones, and almost always they already have everything. You want to make them feel special, yet every year you keep racking your brain for that gift that will truly communicate the sentiment.

We want to illustrate and friend some very useful gifts that will truly be appreciated throughout the year. After all, when one already has everything else, stylish yet practical gifts are most appealing.

FOR THE EXECUTIVE
This magnifying glass-and-letter opener set is an elegant gift that showcases world-class Philippine design and will be an elegant addition to a home office desk.

FOR THE HOSTESS
For anyone who loves to entertain, napkin rings are always welcome and can be used all year round. This great starfish design can be used for lunch or dinner and are versatile enough to suit casual or formal settings.

FOR THE NEWLYWEDS
These serving platters will never go out of style, and they make for elegant food servers when company comes over.

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FOR THE GARDENER
Whether he or she has a small collection of potted herbs or a whole sprawling garden, anyone interested in gardening will love this gardening kit. It comes like an apron, keeping one's hands free, and they are easy to clean, too.

FOR THE GOURMET COOK
Those who love to cook will appreciate any kitchen contraption, but this vegetable chopper should be a top choice and a welcome addition to the kitchen.

FOR THE CHOCOHOLIC
Make delightful French-style hot chocolate any time, any day. This gift will truly warm the chocolate lover's heart.

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Colors of Christmas

From page E1

dor with copper and orange touches. Bring the country spirit to your home by adding a sprinkle of pine cones and maple leaf designed ornaments and embellished copper bells.

For Home is at SM Megamall, SM City Sucat, SM Southmall, U-Mall, the Block at SM City North EDSA and SM Mall of Asia. In the provincial areas, it is at SM Supermalls in Bacoor, Dasmariñas, Clark, Cavite, Manila's Divisoria Mall, Batangas, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro and Cebu.

ALL THAT glitters. Adorn your Christmas tree with sparkling ornaments.

TRADITIONAL red, green and gold colors

RUSTIC holiday. Create a warm and cozy country table setting this Christmas by mixing warm tones of rust and orange, and a sprinkling of pine cones.

MAPLE leaf Christmas ornament in sunburst orange metal as napkin holder

BLACK AND WHITE baubles.

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Design tilt winners' works showcased in Pasay tower

FEDERAL LAND, INC., THE real-estate arm of the Metrobank Group, and Metrobank Foundation, Inc. (MBFI) recently hied to the Metrobank-Ayala Design Exhibition Competition (MADE) in recognition of the country's talented new artists and designers who espouse sustainability in their works.

For the past, Federal Land sponsored the 2008 MADE Interior Design Competition by offering residential units from its prestigious project—Bay Garden Palawan Tower.

Two finalists were recently chosen and their designs were unveiled in the units of Bay Garden Palawan Tower, an upscale residential community in Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard corner Edsa Extension in Pasay.

Adrian del Mundo, a Cebu-based designer, transformed one unit of Bay Garden Palawan into a cosmopolitan loft.

Aptly named "Gaelic," his design is inspired by the traditional Filipino sayo (see The interior space exudes warmth and simplicity.

He utilized recycled materials such as tin tiles woven into a couch, Lauan of woven pandan were used as wall screens. Other materials such as old coco shells, agate, bamboo, fruit and abaca advanced the 44-sqm, one-bedroom unit. These materials are combined with modern pieces of furniture.

Apart from Feig-Gana, an interior designer from Quezon City believes that built and natural environment can closely linked together and this can be best achieved through recycling.

With "Balanse Linko," she enhanced the interiors of Bay Garden Palawan Tower by taking in second-hand items and refurbishing them.

Giants windows, wood planks and balusters graced the living room and bedroom while an old sewing machine was recycled into a working table. Kapiz also measured out of natural lighting by using triangular windows.

"Balanse Linko" created a minimalist (clean) atmosphere, making the unit an ensemble but refreshing (cozy).

Pelgallao wins the grand prize, while Del Mundo took home the special award. They received a cash prize of P300,000 and P150,000, respectively.

Both designs, along with entries in the Painting, Sculpture and Architecture design categories, recently were showcased during the 2008 MADE Awards Night held at La Estrella in Metropolitan Club, along Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, Pasay.

Call Metrobank Foundation at 8988696. For a scheduled visit at the Bay Garden Palawan, call 8511000.

"CAELUM" by Adrian del Mundo, a special awardee in the Interior Design Category of the recently concluded 2008 MADE Competition

LIFESTYLE Parenting

How much tutoring should your child have?

School race is getting tougher. Preschoolers are learning fractions, grade-schoolers are being taught taxonomy

By Maxi Feja de Ocampo
Contributor

I'VE never hired a tutor for my kids. I've always believed that they must learn to be self-reliant. I myself never had a tutor and I was fine (at least almost all of the time). Besides, aren't parents supposed to be teaching their kids, instead of passing on their responsibility to a stranger?

And the cycle—that term comes with a pretty hefty price tag.

But as a working mom, I find it more and more challenging to tutor my kids. When I get home from work, my day has actually just begun.

For working moms, most think of bonding, like dinner moms, the kids' heads that next day. At the last minute we even have to buy them our kids need for projects—tomorrow! (Do teachers think all mothers are stay-at-home moms who can just fly to the mall anytime?)

My point is, I can't tutor the kids myself all the time. It's too stressful. Because at last, or I will lose my mind. So, I came up with a system (where my eldest, Deirdre [turning 13 in January] tutors the youngest, Joel, eight. My middle child, Isaiah, nine, is so efficient and skilled in initiative that I can rely on him to help Joel. But honestly, I feel guilty for not dosing my older kids to teach the youngest.

I also signed up at Yahoo groups and rely on other moms who are blessed with that skills and patience to make reviewers for dosing.

So far, this has been working—my kids' grades are still high, though they are so

NOW PLAYING

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN — BY JEL HARSAN

FUSSO BARDY — BY PFL GRACE

DICK TRACY

LOVEMOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHERRIAD

JAMES BOND — BY BRAD ANDERSON

DRINK COMEDY — BY STEVEN PARLEWSKI

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEEGY — BY LYRA GARCIA (LAVA)

TULDOK — BY HANA COLL

BIKO MACHINE — BY MARC ARPILA

BEN — BY DANIEL WELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Like the Donkey
4 Fine way to fall
8 Mad respect
14 Fifth collection
15 Fine wheels
16 Articles of faith
17 Ian actor
18 Clipper alternatives
20 Golf instructor
22 Spinner's gift
23 Short vacation
24 Inflammatory order
26 Part of a classical cast
28 Like some good beef?
32 Like Pentecost
33 Adj. in FAL
34 Sonnet
36 Corner stuff
38 Go on longer
40 Pay on account
41 Columnist Mumby
43 Cartoonist Thurber
44 Cartoonist Hirsch
46 Geometry, e.g.
47 Cheery comedy
48 Tempo indication
49 Wedding before and on angle
50 "Magic Mirror" singer Frankie
51 Talker Linkletter
52 Jeanette Rankin portrait theme
54 Pub fluid
57 Wings, at times
58 Here, some Vichy with
59 Hotel's offer
60 Rejection letter
61 Wordsworth or Shelley

DOWN
1 Out of reality
2 Hooked rug
3 Mr. Mitchell?
4 Actress Jen
5 Cut
6 Use of majors
7 Israeli coin
8 Italian cars
9 FCC part
10 Rattle on or around
11 Trapper Timothy
12 Bedtime for Bo
13 Duke of old
19 Comedy of country manners
21 "I'll be there" response
25 Weather pattern?
27 Plain dessert
29 Russian woman
30 Wedge, often
31 Continental cup
35 Dark yellow
37 Attention getter
39 Chill
41 Summit
42 Rock and Ice
44 Swamp
45 Ice cream
46 Vitality
47 Valeria Payton villain
48 Fish stew
49 Plots with dots or rots
50 Ice cream treat
52 "It's Complex" author
53 Tower (North), e.g.
54 Ltr.
55 Lowdown
56 Lambert camp attack
57 USPS piece
58 Ltr. __

By Barry Silk
1126/08

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

		2	9	5	3	1		
	7						8	
5				8				6
4				7				1
3	6			4	9	8		2
9								4
7								3
	4			2			1	
		9	7	1	4	6		

Difficulty Level ★★★

1126

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	3	5	2	1	6	8	7
5	8	6	3	7	9	4	2	1
2	1	7	8	4	6	3	5	9
3	6	9	4	1	5	8	7	2
1	5	4	2	8	7	9	6	3
8	7	2	6	9	3	5	1	4
6	3	1	9	5	4	7	2	8
4	9	8	7	6	2	1	3	5
7	2	5	1	3	8	2	4	6

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How much tutoring should your child have?

From page F1

longer house students. The house will open at 09 and they average an 80 (but feel, really).

I am left wondering how I can make sure my children are reaching their full potential. They used to be honor students—what happened? I know they are getting okay grades, but can they do better? I know cheap will be the answer if you. But what can I do to make this happen?

Very competitive

Mom is what I realized—to see tutoring is a positive light.

There are many factors that affect the child's ability to learn and excel.

Times have changed. Preschoolers are learning first-time while grade-schoolers are being taught memorize.

The competition to get ahead is very tough. In my class, the honor roll started with a general average of 88. In my kids' school, it's over 90. The pressure for solidly A's travel has increased tremendously. I pity the kids of the future who can be honor students only with an average of 95.

Natasha Llorando, owner and managing director of Shared Talents and Review Center (call 426-0830 or visit www.talentsandpets.com), says: "Only 10 percent of the families of thousands of applicants we give your get into the top honor colleges. They must have very good grades because top schools do get just consider their scores in the exam but also their grades in high school. It is every parent's dream for their child to be counted among this 10 percent. This is where we come in—it is our mission to help these students secure a bright future."

Llorando says that preschool entrance tests are so competitive that only 350 or around 6,000 pass.

The average class number has increased. In private schools, it is usual to have a classroom with 50 students. Even the best teacher will have difficulty addressing all her students' needs.

Parents

The economic situation has led to double-income families. Parents are either too tired or mentally drained to be effective tutors.

Kids and parents fight—mom is frustrated and wants to get all the studying out of the way, but her child is exhausted and just wants to tell mommy about what happened in school. The sad part is several times don't recognize that it's actually good that we kids like telling us about their day.

Llorando believes that parents are still the best tutors for their children and relatives over who do. But not all parents have the time or skills. Here's why:

- A parent cannot only do one thing. He/she has to cook and relax when they are home to be able to do their job well the next day.
- They have to manage their homemaids, schedules, budget, bills, supplies, etc.
- They must bring the family to doctor and dentist appointments, birthday parties, etc.
- They have other children to take care of.
- Moms must play other roles—wife, daughter, sister or friend.
- They themselves were poor in math in school when they were students.
- Parents have their own goals and dreams to achieve.

Tutoring provides focus

According to Llorando, in a tutorial center, kids can focus on studying. "Everyone is studying, so he will be encouraged to do the same. He is around other children who want to do well. Learning can be fun. A tutor is someone who can provide your child new techniques of studying, new ways of solving a math problem. She can be a mentor, friend, confidante. A young, competent, non-threatening tutor can be a good friend and role model to our kids."

Independence

My main reason for not hiring a tutor is that I believe they should be self-sufficient. I'm afraid a tutor will make them too dependent.

Llorando, however, clarifies that a tutor can actually help a child become more independent. "A good tutor can teach your child effective study habits. Studying usually takes time because the concepts are complex with the text, TV computer, refrigerator in a minimal center. Kids finish homework and review lessons in an hour or two. Once the child is used to this routine, schoolwork will seem much easier, eventually even without a tutor."

"Rizh typically remains as clients for around two years," Llorando says. "Our goal is to let go as soon as possible. After a year, he must have learned how to study by himself so he does not need our services anymore everyday."

Balance

Another reason I hesitate to get a tutor is I feel my kids aren't have time to enjoy their childhood.

Llorando advises: "Balance is the key... it is important to have time for work and play. Having a tutor actually allows students to have time for other activities. Because a tutor is able to help students understand their lessons better, the work should become easier and quicker to accomplish."

When is tutoring good? When is it bad?

OGI VILLAMOR, SCHOOL DIRECTRESS of Integrow Children's Activity Center and Ramon Instructor at Ramon Windhole High Street Center, has about 20 years of education experience (contact 09 27 6099 8007, 956-2200, 921).

Like says, "Over the years, the purpose for tutoring has evolved. Some have nurses because of failing grades, others do this for advancement. Even the tutorial system has changed from one-on-one to group sessions. It is best for parents to choose one that fits the child and his learning style, personality, as well as study habits (e.g. not all children work well with a group, as although group sessions may be cheaper, this may result to lower grades or poorer performance)."

Tutoring, she adds, "is advantageous if it has a positive effect on the child in the long run. If it is used to train children to depend, private study habits or work ethic purchase."

Tutoring becomes a disadvantage "if a child becomes too dependent to the point that (1) tutoring is pointless, the child may have "good grades" but in the absence of the tutor, the child fails."

Villamor's tips on how parents can tutor their kids themselves:

- A parent must only do one and the "backward in method" in teaching her child—after class, he/she child must, then take up the lesson yesterday, then review the current topic for school, then start the work for the next day. He didn't need to review the child even for exams because he was used to daily study already. By exam day, he/she is then ready.
- Parents should closely monitor their kids' learning in the lower grades, particularly during the primary years (up to Grade Three) by making the child to have a daily study habit. By the time the child is in Grade Four, the child may be studying more complicated.
- Daily study is the key. Set a daily study time, even if the child does not have homework, the set hour for study also is day.

What doctors have to say

ANNA C. DE OCAMPO, MD, FAAP, developmental and behavioral pediatrician at the Medical Center in Scottsdale, Arizona, US, says:

"Tutoring is helpful for children who are struggling to keep up with the rest of the class."

A child may need it because:

1. He has a learning disability in reading (dyslexia), math (dyscalculia) or writing (spelling skills or trouble with paragraph writing). some have trouble getting their thoughts down on paper).

2. He is inattentive in class because he may have ADHD or other emotional disorders that prevent him from focusing (depression, anxiety or OCD—Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or anxiety disorder).

3. He may simply be a slow learner. Some kids have a low average IQ (70-85) and they cannot grasp concepts. Therefore they need drills and repetition to learn.

De Ocampo says: "I have never seen tutoring to be detrimental provided the tutor is doing all the work for the child." She adds: "It helps remove the frustration from both parent and child because homework time can be stressful. Tutoring is good if the child needs it and if you can afford it."

BREAD Pudding
ROSE ACTUA

'BAON' OF THE WEEK

Bread pudding

By Norma Chinnawa
Contributor

A LOAF OF BREAD CAN SERVE MORE than one purpose. Aside from sandwiches, it can also be turned into sweet pudding. Here's a pudding recipe that uses a Pullman loaf to great advantage. The loaf does not have to be freshly bought. Even if it's two to three days old, you can still use it for this recipe as long as it doesn't have any mold in it.

Bread Pudding

1 large Pullman loaf sandwich bread
3 ½ c fresh milk, divided
1 c butter, slightly softened
2 c sugar
6 eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract
1 c raisins
½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg

Preheat oven to 300°F. Grease two 9½ x 13 in. baking pans.

Tear the bread into medium-size chunks. Include the crust. Soak bread chunks in 3 ½ cups of milk until softened, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, beat butter in an electric mixer until creamy. Add sugar and continue beating until fluffy.

Pour in remaining 2 cups milk then beat in eggs, one at a time. Beat in vanilla extract, raisins and nutmeg. Fold the butter mixture into the soaked bread.

Spread into prepared pans, dividing equally. Bake for 45 minutes or until firm. Let cool slightly before serving.

Tips

- A Pullman loaf is the type of bread used to make sandwiches. For this recipe, use a large loaf that has about 24-26 pieces of bread.
- After you have poured the milk into the bread mixture, the mixture will look curdled but that's okay.
- In fact, after you have combined the fluffy soaked bread, the whole thing will look very fluid and weird. However, once it's put in the oven, it will start to solidify and firm up.
- To cook in doors, cover with foil and wrap in aluminum foil.

Makes a tasty dessert or snack.

C means TLC

Why C-section babies need extra care

While nothing nurtures like Mother Nature, sometimes she needs a little help- a little bit of Tender Loving Care (TLC). This is especially true with childbirth when a caesarean delivery is deemed necessary due to the delicate condition of the mother or her baby. Caesarean birth is the birth of a baby by surgery. The doctor makes an incision in the belly and the uterus and then removes the baby.

The "Normal" Advantage

Latest studies show that the way babies are brought into the world plays a crucial role on the development of their immune systems.

Dr. Raul Quillamor, an obstetrician-gynecologist and professor at the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center (UERMMMC), pointed out that babies delivered by the vaginal route get in contact with the mother's good bacteria as the baby descends the vaginal canal. The friendly bacteria grow and multiply in the baby's gut, which is the largest organ of his immune system. The more good bacteria an infant has in his gut, the earlier his immune system can be stimulated and trained to be strong.

C-section babies, on the other hand, do not pass through the birth canal. Their sterile birth conditions deprive them of the friendly bacteria that would awaken a strong immune response early in life.

Cause and Effect

What happens next is even more critical: C-section babies become prone to infections and allergies. Dr. Quillamor adds, "Even if there is no parental history of allergy, if the baby is delivered by caesarean section, the risk of allergy is higher as compared to those delivered vaginally." Infections may include gastrointestinal as well as respiratory diseases, like rhinoconjunctivitis, i.e., constant cold.

Baby's breast friend

Dr. Quillamor has this advice: "The best way to address the (immune system) problem is to encourage breastfeeding because breast milk has everything – it has important nutrients for the growth and development of the baby."

According to Dr. Quillamor, breastmilk has antibodies that help protect the baby from developing infections. It also provides friendly organisms like Bifidobacteria and Lactobacilli. These are probiotics the baby needs in his gut to develop a strong immune response.

So if you happen to be one of those moms requiring a C-section, always keep in mind that your C-section baby will need extra loving care. Breastfeeding is the best way to nourish and protect your baby. Breast milk does not only provide the nutrients your baby needs for optimum growth, it also supplies him with antibodies. Breast milk also contains friendly bacteria your baby needs to grow healthy and strong. It's the vital TLC every C-section baby needs.

ZOREN Legaspi and Carmina Villaroel with their kids Maverick Perez and Maria Cassandra

How to create a family moment

THE LATEST SELECTA TV COMMERCIAL emphasizes quality family time.

In the new ad, celebrity parents Zoren Legaspi and Carmina Villaroel and their kids, Maverick Perez and Maria Cassandra, are glued to the TV set while enjoying the newest Selecta Family Pack.

Both busy entertainers, Villaroel and Legaspi try to fulfill their roles as mother and father, especially on Sundays, when Pinoy families are usually at home.

The couple says they also cherish the idea of making such Sunday a memorable family moment. They have breakfast together. They do pool-hang, swimming, hiking, playing ball (before and now) and playing dress-up (mom and daughter).

For Villaroel, family day is important. "We may be busy on weekdays, but we always make time on Sundays to always be fun," she said. "Because that's when we do ordinary-but-family things. We get to be all goofy, carefree and relaxed. In the process, we feel that our children grow with us and we stay young at heart with them every time we're together."

Legaspi agreed. "It's also important that every moment spent with your family is as enjoyable and as fun as how little spend their days with friends. That way they won't feel alienated or restricted at home."

"We make sure we always enjoy each other's company," he added. "So we learn how to make each other laugh, and discover what things can really drive us over the top happy."

Vegetarian cooking classes

SHAM Tanaya

WELLNESS 101 Corp., in cooperation with Yoga Philippines, BIO, is organizing a series of vegetarian cooking classes that started Oct. 28, 2-5 p.m., at Bay 2 Pavilion Room of the Santuario de San Antonio on McKinley Road, Makati.

Chef Sham Tanaya, known for her down-to-earth practical approach, teaches her popular original recipes such as Jasmine Ate Sweet Potatoes in a class, with assistance of 20 students.

Tanaya, herself a strict vegetarian since 1974, has been holding meatless cooking classes for the past 28 years and is one of the country's foremost authorities on vegetarian cuisine.

For call (02)7927127 and (02)6087459 for payment details and reservations.

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

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Co-producer of babies

WITHOUT warning, during the repeat of her "Upclose" concert series at the Captain's Bar of Mandarin Oriental Hotel on Saturday, Sharon Cuneta addressed those separation rumors. "Why cannot po po ako," she told the audience. "Nagkasundo na kaming dalawa." She jokingly introduced her hubby, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, as "my co-producer: ... we made babies together."

OVERHEARD

GAT Rihak Hall and Kris Lawrence

Withdrawal syndrome

STUDIO INSIDERS DIDN'T THAT DRAG during Shaolee and Karylle were lovey-dovey during K's room recording session.

"From the airport, Dong went straight to the studio to visit K. Then he dropped by again a few weeks ago," an insider says. "Pero nung recording studio kaya walang tao."

Are the sit-in lovers having a bad case of withdrawal syndrome?

Karylle is set to sing the national anthem at the Manny Pacquiao-Oscar De la Joya match in Vegas on Dec. 6. Dong plans to watch the fight on his dad. Tell for he doesn't like boxing but on second last Thursday?

Their romance got knocked down but their feelings don't seem to be totally knocked out yet.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Just rumors

Anne Curtis dismisses rumors that she's backbiting **KC Concepcion** who's being linked to her ex-beau **Sam Milby**. She's too much of a lady to backstab anybody. In fact, she says, she's sorry that KC "got dragged into this."

Anne runs into a strong-willed woman in "Baler," Nicolás Mono Marcelo Filmbox entry. Her pretrian Filha, who defies all odds to be with Colin Llenides Rembol. The love story is set against the 1500 "siege of Baler." Says Anne, "Like Filha, when I fall in love, I fall hard." Now that's in out of the picture, could she tell for Echo? "I'm taking it one day at a time."

Ayen is 'Nang'

Ayen Laurel top bills Dolzang UP's "Nang" (Inang) on the film of National Artist Atang dela Rama) morning today until Dec. 14 at the WEPAC Mrs. Geocares Theatre in UP. Her plays the titular role of Da Silvestre, a composer who studied the life of Atang in preparation for a film.

"Atang and I both went through many struggles," says Ayen, who still performs beloved kundiman songs. "But for good old-fashioned music and top-caliber talent.

Trance master

Trance Alliance 2008 brings legendary trance master **Jeba "Oli" Flores**, big and special sound effects genius Digital Blonde in a live set on Nov. 29 at 8 p.m. at the A Venue Events Hall (897-2472). Dolzo's Daniel Primero and Bridgette Mendi's Stephen Sa hosts. Trance Alliance 6!

PERSONAL: Belated birthday greetings to FB guru Tito Bell Gorman who had a grand ball attended by the who's who in business and politics. His company Agents Intermational, (run by my fiance friend Allan Gorman) marked its 20th anniversary and gave thanks for Lito Gorman's leverage getting in SMDC

(E-mail annelaphoto@yahoo.com)

Not committed, not just friends

SINGER KRIS LAWRENCE IS ONE LUCKY guy. Paras among many suitors, he was picked by Karylle Halili, "PBB" (megastar's) former Shaman" for own straight pass.

Karylle, 23, met Kris, 26, when they performed in a series of shows in the United States.

The actress said they immediately hit it off, having a lot of things in common. "We love sweets, Chinese food ... and puppies. Most important, we both don't like partying so much. We'd rather hang out with friends," Karylle said, but soon during a press gathering for the movie, "One Night Only."

She clarified, "[We're] more than friends, but we're not committed." She said they set up walks for them because maintaining a serious relationship is done his childhood.

"I'm busy with TV and movie projects. He's in and out of the country for shows. He just left again for Dubai," Karylle said. "But we make sure to stay in touch by phone or the Net. Basta nagkakausap tuwing may time."

She hopes to spend Christmas with Kris and her family, currently based in Puerto Princesa, Palawan. "Just for a simple dinner," she said.

"One Night Only," directed by Joan Javier Reyes, is Cinema International Films' official entry to the 2008 Metro Manila Film Festival in December.

Karylle plays Jasmine, who enters into relationships with a congressman and a rich Chinese businessman for financial gain. The movie also stars Jennylyn Mercado, Mercedes de Bonzi, Shaun Zubiri, Wenie Concepcion and Pinky Garcia.

Silver Christmas, Karylle said, she may leave for the United States to visit a friend in Los Angeles. "I need a break before working on my next film," she explained. Would Kris join her? "That's a secret ... for me to know and for you to find out."

Kris also is set to star in the remake of the 1979 hit, "Miss X," where award-winning actress and Batangas Gov. Vilma Santos played a prostitute in Amsterdam. Gil Portes directs.

Silver Inel A. Cruz

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7 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
8 ONE TRUE LOVE
9 PASSENGERS / SEX DRIVE

METRO EAST

1 BOLT
2 TWILIGHT
3 BOLT
4 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
5 ERASERHEADS: REUNION CONCERT
6 TWILIGHT
7 SCAREGIVER
8 ONE TRUE LOVE

NOVALICHES

1 TWILIGHT
2 BOLT
3 ONE TRUE LOVE
4 SCAREGIVER

PIONEER

1 TWILIGHT
2 BOLT
3 TWILIGHT
4 ONE TRUE LOVE / SCAREGIVER

STA. ROSA

1 TWILIGHT
2 BOLT
3 SCAREGIVER
4 ONE TRUE LOVE

LIPA

1 TWILIGHT
2 SCAREGIVER
3 ONE TRUE LOVE
4 BOLT

DASMARIÑAS

1 TWILIGHT
2 SCAREGIVER
3 BOLT
4 ONE TRUE LOVE

IMUS

1 TWILIGHT
2 BOLT
3 SCAREGIVER
4 ONE TRUE LOVE

ANGELES

1 TWILIGHT
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3 BOLT
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STARMILLS

1 TWILIGHT
2 SCAREGIVER
3 BOLT
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5 PASSENGERS
6 HUMP AFTER READING

BACOLOD

1 TWILIGHT
2 BOLT
3 SCAREGIVER
4 ONE TRUE LOVE
5 LIVING HELL
6 ERASERHEADS: REUNION CONCERT

ILOILO

1 TWILIGHT
2 BOLT
3 SCAREGIVER
4 ONE TRUE LOVE
5 LIVING HELL
6 ERASERHEADS: REUNION CONCERT

ENTERTAINMENT

Opening This Week

Backstage G4

band's reunion concert on Aug. 28. According to concert producer Susy Rillo, the footage "captured the highlights of the event. From the state-of-the-art lights and sounds and fireworks display to the stage that reportedly cost P40 million." The band only got to play 13 songs because Rustia she was rushed to the hospital, saying the show must...

Dakila Active Vista Film Festival

Dubbed "cinema with a conscience," this week-long festival is a project of Dakila (Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism), in cooperation with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the (Philippine Independent Filmmakers' Multipurpose Cooperative. Each day will be devoted to an advocacy, like environment, gender equality and human rights. Exclusive at Ayala Malls Balintawak/Trabaja.

Twilight

Stars Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Billy Burke, Anna Kendrick, Nikki Reed

Directed by Catherine Hardwicke

Girl (Stewart) transfers to new school in a small town and falls for a handsome vampire (Pattinson) in this teen flick based on a popular series of

Double RP win in Greece festival

FILIPINO ACTORS HOLLYDEE ODAMBLIO Garcia tied for Best Actor for their work in the independent drama "Irida (The Iterate)" at the 49th Thessaloniki Film Festival in Greece. The awards ceremony was held on Sunday.

The news was relayed to Inquirer via SMS on Monday by the film's director, Pauline Villaluna who attended the festival with co-director Ellen Ramos.

Villaluna said Michael Ondaatje Canadian author of "The English Patient," won jury president. Among the jurors was Double Cody, who won an Oscar Original Screenplay for "Juno" early this year.

According to Villaluna, Ondaatje Jr. scribed the Filipino film as "powerful"; Cody said it was "absolutely beautiful."

Lauren, who is currently shooting another indie film, "Adult" (for JC's "Names," to Pérez Rizon, Montalbano, told the Inquirer via e-mail, "This is an early Christmas gift ... my first international acting award ... I'm just filled with gratitude and happiness." He dedicated the honor to his family and countryman Nicky Gallardo.

Garcia told the Inquirer via SMS that he was "shocked" and "happy." He noted that it was his fourth award for the movie.

Locally, Garcia won in the Star Awards and, like Lauren, in the Gawad Urian awards. The two also won in this year's Urian awards.—Garcia for Supporting Actor, Lauren for Actor.

Lauren is also working on another indie film, Enzo Martin's "Independencia," with Nathalie Aghassi.

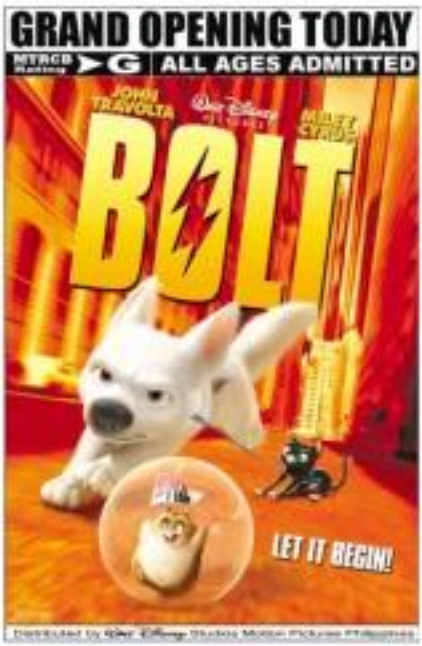
Garcia is co-starring with Bernardo Bertolucci's first movie in "Dese," an entry in the Cinema One Originals film festival.

According to the fest, the Thessaloniki film fest is the "primary showcase" in the Balkan region "for new and emerging filmmakers."

Two other Filipino films, Francis Pasion's "Joy" and Jerrie Monteiro's "Sorbis," were shown at the Greek fest.—is the independent fare section.

According to the festival's website, three Filipino films were in town: "San Jo (Over There)", Special Jury Prize to Romania's "Beacon Sparrow (Hooked)", and Honour to Argentina's Celina Murga for "Una Semana Solo (A Week Alone)."

There was also a tie for Best Actress: Joana Flora and Maria Dinulescu for "Pescuit Sportiv (Hooked)."—Raynard San Diego Jr.



Opening This Week

Scaregivers

Stars Ina Calixcio, Rhea Mockigal, Paulo Cornix, Jose Manalo, Wally Bayola

Directed by Gov de la Cruz

Clumsy hold-uppers (Manalo and Bayola) pretend to be crazy to escape prison, but are locked up in a haunted asylum instead. Dreamboxers say this flick's combination of horror and comedy is a sure crowd-pleaser. Manalo and Bayola's show biz friends like Boy Abunda, Julia Clarete and Vic Sotto make cameo appearances to support the comedy duo's big launch.

Bonus

Stars Julian Dingler, Celso Bolipata, Cherry Pie Picache, Ricky Davao

Directed by Ellen Grace Ann Marfil

Innocent child (Dingler) finds healing in music with the help of an equally tortured violin teacher (Bolipata). The Sharon Pau

ns Enjoyment or Emotional Control for Active Non-Violent sponsors screening on Nov 28, 8:30 p.m., at SM Megamall Cinema 11. Gibbs Cadiz of the festivals says it "offers an emotionally rich, cathartic experience." Nuno critic Joel Zinnel, "It's unexpected and startling in its effectiveness."

Bolt

With the voices of John Travolta, Miley Cyrus, Mark Walton, Susie Essman

Directed by Byron Howard, Chris Williams

Dog (Travolta) who thinks he's a superhero realizes he's an ordinary pooch and embarks on a cross-country trip with his pals, a cat (Essman) and a hamster (Walton). Richard Corliss of Time raves, "[The] visual style is unpretentiously attractive." Dan Fox of Plimington Post finds it "more inspiringly beautiful."

Erasierheads: The Reunion Concert

Stars Sharon Adores, Raimund Marasigan, Buddy Zabala, Ely Buendia

Directed by Chuck Lopez

This is dedicated to those who missed the

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